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Seventy-first session

First Committee

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Official Records

Chair: Mr. Boukadoum (Algeria)

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

Agenda items 89 to 105 (continued)

General debate on all disarmament and international security agenda items

The Chair: All delegations taking the floor are kindly reminded to limit their interventions to eight minutes when speaking in their national capacity.

Mr. Samvelian (Armenia): At the outset, let me congratulate you, Sir, and the other members of the Bureau on your well-deserved election. I wish to assure you of Armenia's cooperation and full support for the Committee's activities.

(spoke in Russian)

It is my honour today to speak on behalf of the States members of the Collective Security Treaty Organization (CSTO) — the Republic of Armenia, the Republic of Belarus, the Republic of Kazakhstan, the Kyrgyz Republic, the Republic of Tajikistan and the Russian Federation — under agenda item 96, "Prevention of an arms race in outer space". Remaining committed to the goal of keeping outer space free of weapons and ensuring the further use of outer space for peaceful purposes only, the States members of CSTO believe that one of the international community's priorities is to conclude an international treaty prohibiting the deployment of weapons and the use of force in outer space.

We welcome the significant expansion in recent years of support for the international initiative on the

political commitment to no first placement of weapons in outer space, which is an important interim step towards an agreement prohibiting the deployment of weapons and the use of force in outer space. The globalization of the initiative on the no first placement of weapons in outer space is gradually becoming a significant factor in the effort to keep outer space free of weapons and, as a result, to strengthen international peace and equal, indivisible security for all.

The establishment of a solid group of responsible States assuming commitments under the initiative on the no first placement of weapons in outer space is gradually becoming one of the most important confidence- and transparency-building measures in international outer-space activities. It has already created a major political barrier to the weaponization of outer space, preventing it from becoming yet another area for armed confrontation. CSTO member States reiterate their call to all States to follow their example and take on the political commitment to prohibiting the deployment of weapons in outer space.

Mr. Alrowaiei (Bahrain) *(spoke in Arabic)*: At the outset, I would like to warmly congratulate you, Sir, on your election to preside over the First Committee at its seventy-first session. I would also like to congratulate the other members of the Bureau. We are fully confident that your outstanding skills and expertise will facilitate our work and ensure success. I also thank your predecessor, the Permanent Representative of the Netherlands, for his conduct of the proceedings during the seventieth session.

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My delegation aligns itself with the statements made to the Committee by the representatives of Tunisia, on behalf of the Group of Arab States, and Indonesia, on behalf of the Movement of Non-Aligned Countries (see A/C.1/71/PV.2).

Global peace, security and stability cannot be achieved if nuclear weapons and other weapons of mass destruction are allowed to proliferate. Such weapons are a threat to global security and peace, and humankind should be free of them. In that regard, I would like to mention some relevant resolutions on disarmament and non-proliferation, the most recent of which is General Assembly resolution 70/34, which calls on States to conduct negotiations on a comprehensive and non-discriminatory convention on the prohibition of the use, acquisition, production and stockpiling of nuclear weapons. A high-level international conference on nuclear disarmament should also be held.

General Assembly resolution 50/66, pertaining to the establishment of a nuclear-weapon-free zone in the Middle East, underlined the need to implement the resolution on the subject adopted at the 1995 Review Conference of the Parties to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons. It also highlighted the importance of universalizing the Treaty. It called on all countries in the Middle East that had not yet acceded to the Treaty to do so as soon as possible and to subject their nuclear facilities, without exception, to the International Atomic Energy Agency safeguards. To that end, the Kingdom of Bahrain stresses the importance of taking the necessary action to rid the Middle East, including the Arab Gulf States, of weapons of mass destruction and nuclear weapons.

The Kingdom of Bahrain underscores the importance of implementing the provisions of the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons with regard to all parties, without prejudice to the inalienable right of countries to use nuclear technology and develop research, production and the use of nuclear energy for peaceful purposes without discrimination, in line with articles I and II of the Treaty. The Kingdom of Bahrain reiterates its commitment to working with you, Sir, and the other members of the Committee in order to achieve progress on all issues related to disarmament and international security.

Mr. Al-Dai (Kuwait) (*spoke in Arabic*): I would like to congratulate you, Sir, and the other members of the Bureau on your election to chair this session of the

First Committee. With your experience, we trust that our work will be crowned with success. I should also like to take this opportunity to express my appreciation to your predecessor, the Permanent Representative of the Netherlands, for his work as Chair of the previous session.

I align myself with the statement made by the representatives of Indonesia on behalf of the Movement of Non-Aligned Countries and of Tunisia on behalf of the Group of Arab States, respectively (see A/C.1/71/PV.2).

My country reasserts its unwavering position with regard to disarmament and international security. Our strategy is based on the observance of international conventions, particularly those on disarmament and international peace and security, in accordance with the Charter of the United Nations and the United Nations message to preserve international peace and security. Our position has remained unchanged while nuclear weapons have proliferated throughout the world, as have other weapons of mass destruction. Even minimal use of them would wipe out life on Earth. My country has signed and ratified conventions and other international instruments on disarmament, such as the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT), the Chemical Weapons Convention and the Biological Weapons Convention. We have also acceded to the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty, the Convention on Early Notification of a Nuclear Accident and the Comprehensive Safeguard Agreement and its Additional Protocol.

In addition, we reaffirm the importance of all of those instruments in limiting the threat of the proliferation of the weapons concerned, in particular the NPT. That instrument is the pillar of multilateral disarmament action, which aims to make the world a safer place. We must also work to find a balanced approach to the three nuclear-related Conventions, while underscoring the importance of the inalienable right of countries to use nuclear energy for peaceful purposes, in line with International Atomic Energy Agency safeguards.

My country reaffirms its commitment to finding a solution within the framework of multilateral action, in accordance with the Charter of the United Nations. We reiterate the importance of the Conference on Disarmament, which, along with the First Committee, is central to the United Nations disarmament framework, pursuant to the mandate conferred upon it in 1978. In

that regard, my delegation underscores the importance of convening a conference in order to break the 20-year deadlock in all of the United Nations disarmament machinery. We must find resolve the problems on our agenda. That is why all States Members of the United Nations must find solutions and mechanisms to overcome the growing number of challenges.

The establishment of nuclear-weapon-free zones and zones free of weapons of mass destruction around the world is an integral part of the NPT, one of the ways by which we can achieve the United Nations disarmament goals. Nonetheless, the Middle East is far from attaining that goal, because Israel has continued to acquire such weapons, in violation of all the international resolutions in accordance with which States may accede to and comply with the NPT. Israel should submit all of its nuclear facilities to the International Atomic Energy Agency's comprehensive safeguards regime. In addition, Israel continues to refuse to honour its commitments under the resolutions adopted at the 1995 and 2010 NPT Review Conferences. While those resolutions reaffirmed the importance of holding a conference in 2012 on the Middle East, it did not take place. Israel continues to reject the will and desire of the international community and refuses to comply with international instruments. We are also deeply disappointed by the fact that the 2015 NPT Review Conference did not yield concrete results.

We must establish a nuclear-weapon-free zone in the Middle East. In that regard, we welcome the recommendations made by the Open-ended Working Group taking forward multilateral nuclear disarmament negotiations, which met in Geneva, and all of the negotiations on a comprehensive and non-discriminatory convention on nuclear weapons. We must make every effort to hold a high-level international meeting on nuclear disarmament by 2018. The International Day for the Total Elimination of Nuclear Weapons must continue to be celebrated on 26 September.

We have made progress in certain areas, and that gives us grounds for hope in the possibilities afforded by international and regional efforts. We must find solutions to mitigate the harmful effects of the proliferation of weapons in all their forms if we are to avoid catastrophe. My delegation trusts that our deliberations will be transparent and flexible, so that we can achieve a world free of nuclear weapons and weapons of mass destruction and thereby meet the hopes of peoples throughout the world for peace and security.

Mr. Ciss (Senegal) (*spoke in French*): First of all, let me warmly congratulate you, Sir, on your election as Chair of the First Committee and assure you of my delegation's full cooperation. I also congratulate the other members of the Bureau.

Senegal aligns itself with the statements made previously by the representatives of the Republic of Indonesia, on behalf of the Movement of Non-Aligned Countries, and Nigeria, on behalf of the Group of African States (see A/C.1/71/PV.2).

Current geopolitical tensions and regional instabilities complicate the process of nuclear disarmament and non-proliferation. Nuclear disarmament and non-proliferation in all their aspects are a long way from being achieved, and multilateral negotiations are making very little progress, as illustrated by the failure of the most recent Review Conference on the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT), held in May 2015. More than ever before, the nuclear-weapon States urgently need to adopt specific measures in order to achieve the goal of disarmament, in accordance with their obligations and other commitments under the NPT. The international community must act swiftly to commit to the adoption of a global convention on nuclear weapons as soon as possible. In that regard, my delegation welcomes the report of the Open-ended Working Group taking forward multilateral nuclear disarmament negotiations (see A/71/371). We support its recommendations, including on the holding of a United Nations conference in 2017 to begin negotiations on a treaty to prohibit nuclear weapons with a view to their complete eradication.

We reaffirm our view that multilateralism appears to be the optimal method of achieving tangible results. We also welcome the Iranian nuclear agreement of 14 July 2015, which is a major step forward in non-proliferation efforts, although by itself it cannot overcome the challenges in the Middle East, including the pertinent issue of holding a conference on the establishment of a nuclear-weapon-free zone in that region.

The ultimate goal is to achieve a world free of nuclear weapons, and that depends entirely on achieving complete nuclear disarmament. We therefore ask the nuclear-weapon States to work towards the complete elimination of their nuclear warheads, which remains the only way for the world to guard against the devastation and misery that could occur as a result of the use of nuclear weapons. That is the only way to ensure

the survival of our planet and future generations, and to enable them to live in a peaceful, safe and prosperous world rather than in fear of a nuclear explosion. That highlights the importance of the humanitarian initiative against nuclear weapons, which reflects the willingness of States and other civil society actors to find other, effective ways and means that will enable us to eradicate weapons that pose a constant threat to humankind.

With regard to small arms and light weapons, which have a lasting impact on the social and political stability of many countries in the South, particularly in Africa, we welcomed the entry into force on 24 December 2014 of the Arms Trade Treaty, whose second Conference of States Parties was held in Geneva in August. We call on all countries that have not yet done so to sign and ratify the Treaty as soon as possible in order to facilitate its universalization and implementation. That will enable us to reach the goal of establishing effective monitoring systems with a view to limiting the sale of conventional weapons and, in particular, to preventing such weapons from being diverted to illegal markets that foment conflict and instability and affect the poorest and most vulnerable communities.

We must also work to reduce the illicit transfer, movement and manufacture of small arms and light weapons, whose indiscriminate spread remains a source of concern in several regions of the world. In that connection, the adoption by consensus of the outcome document of the 2012 Review Conference reaffirmed the commitment of the States Members of the United Nations to implementing the Programme of Action to Prevent, Combat and Eradicate the Illicit Trade in Small Arms and Light Weapons in All Its Aspects. The Programme, which strengthens cooperation and assistance among States, is a follow-up mechanism for the next six-year cycle in preparation for the upcoming Review Conference.

In addition, we welcome the sixth Biennial Meeting of the States on Small Arms to consider the Programme of Action, which was held in June. Following that meeting, an outcome document was adopted by consensus. However, there was a regrettable lack of consensus with regard to possible integration of the issue of ammunition and its management into the Programme of Action, as well as no explicit reference to the Arms Trade Treaty. Nonetheless, the International Instrument to Enable States to Identify and Trace, in a Timely and Reliable Manner, Illicit Small Arms and Light Weapons, as well as international aid and

cooperation in the implementation of the Programme of Action and the International Tracing Instrument — in particular though capacity-building and training, as well as the transfer of technology and equipment to States that request them — are to be commended.

Negotiations on an agreement on a fissile material cut-off treaty for military purposes — another essential pillar in the area of disarmament and non-proliferation — are also at a standstill, despite the fact that some progress has been made. In the meantime, we must ensure that the stockpiles of fissile material in 32 countries do not fall into the wrong hands and that the Comprehensive-Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty enters into force without delay. At the same time, the inalienable right of countries to engage in the development, research, production and use of nuclear energy for peaceful purposes, under the watchful eye of the International Atomic Energy Agency, must be respected. To that end, it would be useful to strengthen the authority and capacity of the Agency.

We also reaffirm the exclusive role of the Conference on Disarmament as the sole multilateral negotiating body on disarmament matters, as well as that of the Disarmament Commission, which will complete its cycle of negotiations next year. At that time, we hope, the Commission will have specific recommendations for the General Assembly. With regard to other weapons of mass destruction, we call for the signature and ratification of the Convention on the Prohibition of the Development, Production, Stockpiling and Use of Chemical Weapons and on Their Destruction and the universalization of the Convention on Cluster Munitions.

Finally, my country welcomes the invaluable contribution made by non-governmental organizations in the area of disarmament. We reaffirm that they should be accorded their rightful place in our discussions. In conclusion, I assure you once again, Sir, of my delegation's willingness to continue to fully and constructively participate in our work.

Mr. Wang Qun (China) (*spoke in Chinese*): I would first like to congratulate you, Sir, on your election to preside over the First Committee during this session.

Peace and development are humankind's common aspirations. History has shown time and again that without peace there can be no development and without stability there can be no prosperity. Human society today has become an intimate community with a

common destiny, in which the security interests of all countries are intertwined.

The world is undergoing unprecedented changes. While on the whole the international security situation is stable, we are confronted with challenges. Geopolitical hotspot issues continue to crop up. Terrorism and extremism are increasingly rampant, and global security governance remains an arduous task. The process of international arms control, disarmament and non-proliferation is at a critical, historic stage.

The nuclear-disarmament process is faltering. The authority of the nuclear non-proliferation regime is being undermined. The existing disarmament architecture is fraught with challenges. Rules and norms on emerging strategic frontiers such as outer space, cyberspace and autonomous weapons have yet to be put in place, and the basis for the global strategic balance and stability is being eroded. To effectively address such security challenges, the international community must cooperate fully and focus its efforts on the following five areas.

First, it must take a clear-cut position in favour of the new concept of international security. The international community should abandon the Cold War mentality, foster a new concept of common, comprehensive, cooperative and sustainable security and create a security pattern that features fairness, justice, joint participation and shared benefits. That will build a new paradigm for international relations, underpinned by cooperation that benefits everyone and forges a community with a common destiny for humankind.

China has always endeavoured to build world peace, contribute to global development and uphold international order. China has never been covetous of the interests of other countries and will never give up on its own legitimate rights and interests. China has consistently pursued a national defence policy that is defensive in nature. The Chinese army has always been a staunch force in maintaining world peace and regional stability. Last year, China started its comprehensive implementation of a strategic approach to strengthen the armed forces through reform, launched a process of deepening the national defence and military reform, and announced its decision to cut its troop numbers by 300,000. Reforming its national defence and military is a major strategic decision that China must make in order to cope with the complex international situation and build a strong national defence structure and powerful

armed forces commensurate with China's international standing and in line with its security and development interests. Once again, those reforms demonstrate China's firm commitment to peaceful development.

Secondly, the international community must spare no efforts to maintain global strategic balance and stability. It is the shared aspiration of the international community to completely prohibit and thoroughly destroy nuclear weapons and achieve the goal of a world free of nuclear weapons. Nuclear disarmament should be pursued in a step-by-step manner, based on upholding the principles of maintaining global strategic stability and undiminished security for all. The policy of the no first use of nuclear weapons deserves universal compliance, since it can effectively reduce the threat of nuclear weapons, decrease the danger of nuclear war and prevent nuclear proliferation.

The issue of missile-defence systems affects global strategic stability and mutual trust between major countries. The deployment of global missile-defence systems by the United States seriously undermines the strategic interests of the countries concerned. It will impede the nuclear-disarmament process, trigger a regional arms race and escalate military confrontation. United States deployment of the Terminal High Altitude Area Defense system will not alleviate the security concerns of the relevant parties. It will neither help achieve the goal of denuclearizing the Korean peninsula nor promote the maintenance of peace and stability there. It will severely undermine the strategic security interests of the countries in the region, including China, and disrupt the regional strategic balance. China is firmly opposed to such an approach and will take the measures it deems necessary to defend its national security interests and regional strategic balance. We strongly urge the United States and the Republic of Korea to make a greater effort to uphold peace and stability on the peninsula, take the legitimate concerns of China and other countries of the region seriously, and put an immediate end to the deployment process.

Thirdly, the international community must move with the times and promote the establishment of rules and norms on international security. While continuing to implement, develop and improve the existing international rules and norms in the nuclear, biological, chemical and other areas, the international community should also give due attention to the absence of rules and norms in emerging frontiers, such as cyberspace and outer space, and actively push for the formulation

of rules and norms that will enable such frontier areas to be of maximum benefit to humankind. China attaches great importance to the development of rules and norms in global security governance, and actively shares its knowledge of the subject.

Cyberspace is the common wealth of humankind. The international community should bear the interests of the community with a common destiny in mind and safeguard the security of cyberspace and its development. China advocates building a rules-based cyberspace order based on the principles of peace, sovereignty, universal benefits and shared governance. In that process, we should continue to study the application of existing international law without any preconceived views and explore the possibility of creating new international rules to cope with current challenges. At this stage, the formulation of a code of conduct for national actors should be our focus, as that would help us to accumulate greater common understanding. In that regard, China supports the work of the Group of Governmental Experts on Developments in the Field of Information and Telecommunications in the Context of International Security.

Fourthly, the international community must make steadfast efforts to consolidate multilateral disarmament treaty mechanisms. The existing arms control, disarmament and non-proliferation treaties are the pillars ensuring the stability of the international security order. The Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT) is the cornerstone of the international nuclear non-proliferation regime. The NPT's three pillars of nuclear disarmament, non-proliferation and the peaceful use of nuclear energy must be promoted in a comprehensive, balanced and rational manner as they bear on the security of every nation and the well-being of its people. Double standards and other selective approaches will seriously undermine the value and authority of the NPT and have negative consequences. It should be emphasized that the Conference on Disarmament (CD) is irreplaceable as the sole multilateral negotiating body for disarmament. We are opposed to any approach to set up new systems to outside the CD, thereby weakening the foundation of international security mechanisms. It is definitely not the right way to solve the problems.

Fifthly, the international community must work actively and prudently to deal with global hotspot issues. We should adopt a comprehensive approach and consider past and present situations. We should focus

on resolving pressing regional security issues and exploring ways to address potential security threats, so as to avoid coming up with solutions that are only partial.

China has long worked actively to help resolve hotspot issues.

With regard to the Iranian nuclear issue, China has always held an objective and fair position, and contributed to the conclusion of the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action (JCPOA) by promoting peaceful talks and dialogue. China has actively promoted the modernization of the Arak heavy-water reactor project and other follow-up activities related to the implementation of the JCPOA. We hope that the parties concerned will honour their political commitments, fulfil their obligations in a balanced manner, handle their disputes properly and push for the JCPOA's implementation.

With regard to the nuclear issue on the Korean peninsula, China believes that it is imperative to denuclearize the peninsula and maintain peace and stability both on the peninsula and in the region. It is important to ensure that the issue is addressed through dialogue and consultation and that the international nuclear non-proliferation regime is effectively upheld.

In his speech addressed to the General Assembly at its seventieth session, Chinese President Xi Jinping expounded China's views and positions on international peace and security (see A/70/PV.13). China has honoured its commitments, having dispatched more than 30,000 peacekeepers to 29 peacekeeping operations. Of the permanent members of the Security Council, China is the largest contributor of peacekeepers and the second largest contributor to United Nations peacekeeping costs. We have provided humanitarian demining assistance in various forms to more than 40 countries in Asia, Africa and Latin America. This month, China will host a demining training course for participants from Cambodia and Egypt in Nanjing and provide demining equipment and funds to those countries.

Security is as precious as the air, but people do not notice it until it is gone. China stands ready to work with other members of the international community and to continue to participate actively in global security governance, so as to enable a new security concept to take root in people's minds, new security measures to benefit all of humankind and peace and development to last forever.

Mr. Martins (Angola): May I begin by congratulating you, Sir, on your election to chair the First Committee, and assure you of the Angolan delegation's full support and cooperation in the Committee's work. I also take the opportunity to commend Ambassador Van Oosterom for his leadership of the Committee during the preceding session.

The Angola delegation aligns itself with the statements delivered by the representatives of Nigeria, on behalf of the Group of African States, and Indonesia, on behalf of the Movement of Non-Aligned Countries, respectively (see A/C.1/71/PV.2).

In line with the African Group statement, our delegation underscores the importance of General Assembly resolution 70/47 in its call to all States, particularly the nuclear-weapon States, to take into consideration the catastrophic consequences of resorting to such weapons of annihilation. We also emphasize General Assembly resolution 70/34 as a fundamental element of multilateral disarmament efforts that provides a specific road map towards achieving a comprehensive convention on nuclear disarmament, aimed at the prohibition of the development, production, possession, acquisition, testing, stockpiling, transfer, use or threat of use of nuclear weapons and the total elimination of such weapons.

The Angolan delegation wishes to underline the relevance and the vital importance of multilateralism in the areas of disarmament, non-proliferation and international security, and reiterates its commitment to the principles and objectives enshrined in the Charter of the United Nations and those embraced by the Non-Aligned Movement. In aligning ourselves with the statement delivered on behalf of the Non-Aligned Movement, we highlight the call for effective measures on nuclear disarmament. In that regard, we urge the non-aligned countries to take tangible steps aimed at renouncing and dismantling such weapons.

Disarmament, particularly nuclear disarmament, has been at the core of the international community's efforts since the founding of the United Nations, through the establishment of a robust non-proliferation regime as a basic requirement for the achievement of international peace and security and for preventing the danger of recourse to nuclear weapons. The fight against nuclear proliferation has been embraced by the international community with mixed results. It should be recognized that since the regime in place has been

unable to stop proliferation, a constant fear persists that given the increased tensions in most regions of the world, more countries may resort to developing, producing or acquiring such weapons in their pursuit of national interests and in violation of international law.

The threat of proliferating weapons of mass destruction falling into the hands of non-State actors must also be a central element in the discussion on non-proliferation. A comprehensive review is currently under way on the status of the implementation of resolution 1540 (2004), under which the States Members of the United Nations are required to reinforce their obligations under the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT), the Chemical Weapons Convention and the Biological Weapons Convention, while recognizing the comprehensive roles played by the International Atomic Energy Agency and the Organization for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons in the efforts to fill the gaps in regulatory and enforcement measures, including terrorism-related proliferation activities by non-State actors.

The threat posed to humankind by the existence of nuclear weapons is real and must not be underestimated. That is why nuclear disarmament and the total elimination of nuclear weapons, which represent the NPT's overarching objective, remain one of the key priorities of Angola's foreign policy. The African framework relating to nuclear non-proliferation, that is, the Treaty of Pelindaba, is significant in that regard through its establishing of a nuclear-weapon-free zone in Africa.

Angola is deeply concerned about the ongoing challenges and conflicts in Africa and elsewhere. Weapons are now easily obtainable, cheaply purchased through criminal networks, and generally supplied by States involved in dangerous games of influence and power to non-State armed groups and terrorists, spreading destruction, anarchy and chaos. Small arms and light weapons have become the real weapons of mass destruction in conflicts in Africa, the Middle East and elsewhere. Given the massively destructive character of such weapons, we are of the view that the small-arms-control regime, which seeks to control the trafficking in and supply of small arms and light weapons to non-State armed groups, should be strengthened and restrictive measures applied, in accordance with Security Council resolution 1540 (2004). Strengthening border security in Africa is a key factor in curbing the trafficking in weapons and in implementing other mandates, such as

the Protocol for the Prevention, Control and Reduction of Small Arms and Light Weapons in the Great Lakes Region and the Horn of Africa.

In order to translate Angola's commitment to implementing non-proliferation regimes controlling the acquisition of weapons of mass destruction, the Angolan Government is drafting appropriate legislation and adopting operational measures to that end. We have established a national authority for the control of nuclear weapons and other weapons of mass destruction, coordinated by the Ministry of National Defence, bringing Angola in line with its international obligations under the relevant non-proliferation instruments. Angola has also ratified the NPT, the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty and the Chemical Weapons and the Biological Weapons Conventions.

In conclusion, we will endeavour to ensure that our deliberations here focus on advancing the Committee's work by enhancing political will based on the principles of transparency, verification and sustainability for international disarmament and security measures. We believe that will enrich our debate and ensure the success of the overall work of the Committee.

Lastly, on behalf of my delegation, I would like to commend the initiatives undertaken by some States and international, regional and subregional organizations to promote the non-proliferation of weapons of mass destruction and conventional weapons. In that connection, we support Nigeria's initiative to submit draft resolutions on the African nuclear-weapon-free zone treaty, the United Nations Regional Centre for Peace and Disarmament in Africa and the United Nations fellowship, training and advisory services.

Mr. Htin Lynn (Myanmar): I would like to join previous speakers in congratulating you, Sir, and the other members of the Bureau on your well-deserved election. I assure you of my delegation's full support and cooperation.

Nuclear weapons are the most dangerous and destructive weapons on Earth. As such, nuclear disarmament is a priority for most of us. Myanmar continues to believe that the only absolute guarantee against the use or threat of use of nuclear weapons is their total elimination. Their continued existence and possession by a few serves as a stimulus for the rest to go nuclear, which is a dangerous path for all. If we are to create a safer and more secure world in which international peace and security prevails and is

sustained, we must take the security of all into serious consideration — not just that of a few and their allies. Many in this room have expressed the view that nuclear weapons must be banned, like other weapons of mass destruction. They must be outlawed, in all aspects, as an interim measure leading to their total elimination.

In that regard, Myanmar welcomes the steps taken bilaterally in the context of the New START Treaty. However, we would like to see faster and bolder measures leading to the total elimination of nuclear weapons in a predictable time frame. The Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT) remains the cornerstone of nuclear disarmament and non-proliferation. Obligations under article VI of the NPT must be fulfilled by all parties in good faith and with renewed political will, particularly the nuclear-weapon States. The indefinite extension of the NPT in 1995 should not be taken for granted. All three pillars of the Treaty must be pursued in a balanced manner. At the same time, the NPT Review Conferences must be brought back on track by raising the level of trust between the nuclear-weapon States and the non-nuclear-weapon States, but such mutual trust can only be earned through concrete actions on the ground.

The continued reliance on a nuclear deterrent derives from the very existence of nuclear weapons. Their existence inflicts insecurity on others, and then reliance on one's own arsenal for deterrence grows. That vicious cycle must be stopped. Myanmar welcomes the report and recommendations of the Open-ended Working Group taking forward multilateral nuclear disarmament negotiations (see A/71/371), established under resolution 70/33, as an important contribution to the ultimate goal of the total elimination of nuclear weapons. Security Council resolution 2310 (2016) supports the broader objectives of the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty (CTBT). Universalization and early entry into force are key to an effective CTBT. We call upon all States that have not signed or ratified the Treaty, particularly the eight remaining annex 2 States, to do so without further delay. Nuclear tests by anyone under any circumstances runs counter to our common goal of peace and security for all.

In our view, both chemical and biological weapons are uncivilized and inhumane. Any violation of the near-universal obligations under the related Treaties poses a direct challenge to the integrity of those legal instruments and our civilization. No violation of them should ever be condoned. On the bright side, we would

like to commend the work of the Organization for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapon, which has resulted in getting rid of 93 per cent of all declared chemical weapons to date.

Myanmar reaffirms its continued support for and confidence in the relevancy of the Conference on Disarmament (CD) as the sole multilateral negotiating forum for disarmament. Last year, our presidency observed that greater political will on the part of some member States of the CD is very much needed to overcome the deadlock. The persistent stagnation in the CD and the unproductiveness of the United Nations Disarmament Commission must be urgently addressed by convening a fourth special session of the General Assembly devoted to disarmament.

The negotiation in the CD of a treaty on the future production and existing stockpiles of fissile materials is long overdue. We must redouble our efforts and renew our political will for an early negotiation on that issue. We reiterate our call for negotiating and concluding an international legal instrument on unconditional security assurances to non-nuclear-weapon States against the use or threat of use of nuclear weapons under any circumstances.

The South-East Asia Nuclear-Weapon-Free Zone strengthens global nuclear non-proliferation and disarmament norms and consolidates international efforts towards peace and security. We recommend that the nuclear-weapon States step up their efforts to resolve all outstanding issues on signing and ratifying the Treaty, as we are fully committed to broadening its adherence.

Security Council resolution 1540 (2004) remains a fundamental obligation of States with regard to the non-proliferation of weapons of mass destruction. Myanmar thanks the Office for Disarmament Affairs and the Regional Centre for Peace and Disarmament in Asia and the Pacific for their support to our national round table on the implementation of resolution 1540 (2004), held in Nay Pyi Taw, our capital, early this year.

Despite the fact that our national priorities are focused on our democratization processes, we have not lost sight of our disarmament agenda. In 2013, Myanmar signed an Additional Protocol with the International Atomic Energy Agency, and in 2014 and 2015, respectively, we ratified the Biological Weapons Convention and the Chemical Weapons Convention. Our ratification of the CTBT, on 21 September, is

the latest instalment in our efforts to achieve our disarmament goals. Myanmar will be submitting a draft resolution (A/C.1/71/L.26) that focuses on concrete and practical steps leading to the total elimination of nuclear weapons. We shall reflect more on that in the appropriate cluster discussions.

In closing, I hope that together we will be able move towards creating a safer world through our work in the Committee in the coming weeks.

Ms. Bartolini (San Marino): First of all, I would like to congratulate you, Sir, and the Bureau on your election. I am sure that, under your guidance, the Committee will be very efficient and productive.

The enormous challenges that the international community is facing today are unprecedented. The heavy burden of ongoing conflicts in several areas of the world, together with the alarming disregard by warring parties for international human rights and humanitarian law, has reached an unacceptable level. Furthermore, the growing number of dreadful terrorist attacks worldwide makes the situation even more alarming. Today, no nation can claim immunity from terrorist attacks, and the possible link between terrorism and chemical, biological and nuclear security is, unfortunately, a threat that we have to consider.

Promoting disarmament and non-proliferation has therefore never been so urgent as now. The total eradication of weapons of mass destruction is one of the founding principles of the United Nations and the only way to prevent our destruction. This year marks the twentieth anniversary of the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty. We welcome the latest ratifications, but regrettably, despite the overwhelming support, the Treaty has yet to come into force. We urge all States to ratify it, since its entry into force would represent a vital step towards a more secure world for all. Until then, we call upon all States to refrain from any action that would contradict its purpose. In that connection, San Marino is very concerned about the nuclear tests conducted by the Democratic People's Republic of Korea and strongly condemns that irresponsible behaviour.

Sadly, the nuclear-disarmament and non-proliferation regime has made very slow progress in recent years. The inability of the 2015 Review Conference of the Parties to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT) to reach a consensus outcome document was particularly disappointing. We therefore call upon all States to

engage constructively in the new review cycle of the NPT, which remains the cornerstone of the nuclear non-proliferation regime. No people or country should ever experience the devastation and the destructive effects of a nuclear detonation, and the overwhelming international support for the Humanitarian Pledge shows the urgency of addressing that issue. San Marino appreciates the efforts and the work of the Open-ended Working Group taking forward multilateral nuclear disarmament negotiations (see A/71/371), which has demonstrated many States' willingness to start the negotiation process for a legally binding instrument for the prohibition of nuclear weapons.

The Republic of San Marino is very concerned about recent incidents involving the use of chemicals on civilians, and firmly condemns any use of chemical weapons by any party. The use of such weapons is a clear violation of international law, and those responsible for such abuses must be held accountable. In that regard, both the Chemical Weapons Convention and the Biological Weapons Convention (BWC) are of critical importance. Any biological attack would have catastrophic and irreversible consequences. We welcome the upcoming Review Conference of the States Parties to the BWC in November, and we consider the Conference to be an opportunity to strengthen the Convention.

San Marino is deeply concerned about the high number of casualties caused by small arms and light weapons and about irresponsible arms transfers and illicit trafficking in such weapons. The recent adoption of the Arms Trade Treaty and the growing number of its ratifications represent a remarkable success and a step in the right direction. The Treaty sets robust global standards for addressing a thorny problem that helps to undermine peace and security. Illicit trafficking fuels conflicts, instability and violence everywhere, causing great human suffering and weakening development. That link between development and peace and security has also been stressed in the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, in which we have all committed to significantly reducing illicit arms flows by 2030. We must therefore now work to implement that target and, in that regard, we welcome the successful outcome of the sixth Biannual Meeting of States on 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.

The protection of civilians in armed conflict should be one of our priorities. In recent years,

homes, hospitals, schools and vital infrastructure in several countries have been targeted and bombarded. Regrettably, explosive weapons have also been used in populated areas, causing unnecessary suffering and generating the displacement and death of many civilians. We urge all parties to refrain from the use of explosive devices in populated areas, in order to minimize severe injuries and civilian deaths, including of children and aid workers.

We are deeply concerned about such acts, and we believe that protecting civilians from indiscriminate weapons is one of our fundamental duties. We live in a period of geopolitical instability that has created greater risks of global insecurity, an arms race and growing nuclear dangers. We should now redouble our efforts to tackle the current dangers with a renewed political will and a revitalized disarmament agenda, bearing in mind that no country alone can confront the growing numbers of challenges that we are witnessing today.

Making progress in disarmament is our shared responsibility, and our different perspectives should not be an excuse for inaction. If we really want to overcome today's obstacles, we all need to work harder and engage in good faith and in a spirit of dialogue and cooperation. Only through that will we have a real chance to fulfil our mandate and create a world that is more secure for us and for future generations.

Mr. Al-Otoom (Jordan) (*spoke in Arabic*): At the outset, I should like to congratulate you, Sir, on your election as Chair of the First Committee at its seventy-first session. We are fully confident that your remarkable competence and experience will help us succeed. I would also like to congratulate the other members of the Bureau.

We align ourselves with the statements made by the representatives of Tunisia, on behalf of the Group of Arab States, and Indonesia, on behalf of the Group of Non-Aligned Countries, respectively (see A/C.1/71/PV.2).

The First Committee is a vital platform for addressing threats to international peace and security and the challenges of disarmament, non-proliferation, weapons of mass destruction and conventional arms. The Committee is also the forum for reviewing and assessing the progress made in implementing the relevant conventions and treaties. It is therefore incumbent on all States Members of the United Nations to ensure that the Committee is able to undertake its

mandated task, and we will strive to make that true during the current session.

Based on our belief in a culture of peace and world peace in particular, we in the Kingdom of Jordan have joined the majority of international conventions and treaties related to nuclear weapons and weapons of mass destruction. We faithfully observe all of our obligations under the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT) and the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty. Jordan is also a member of the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) and the Organization for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons, as well as other international organizations and treaties on weapons of mass destruction and their non-proliferation. Accordingly, we call for the enhancement of international nuclear security, including the prevention of the smuggling of nuclear materials, and for the NPT to be strengthened thereby. In that regard, we regret the failure of the 2015 NPT Review Conference to produce an outcome document. We invite all parties to take on their responsibilities and to implement all NPT decisions.

Once again, we stress the need for Israel to join the Treaty and to subject all of its facilities and activities to the International Atomic Energy Agency's comprehensive safeguards regime. Achieving the global objective of non-proliferation, and encouraging countries in the Middle East to willingly honour their obligations not to seek to possess nuclear weapons, requires the implementation of the 1995 Review Conference decision to declare the Middle East region a zone free of nuclear weapons and other weapons of mass destruction. And that came about as a result of a decision to extend the Treaty indefinitely.

Article IV of the NPT grants States the right to use nuclear energy for peaceful purposes. We stress that that is a basic right for all, guaranteed and ensured by the NPT. The article states in particular that countries may develop programmes for the peaceful use of nuclear energy as part of their domestic energy production, in view of the fact that many countries lack alternative power sources. The use of nuclear energy for development purposes is therefore a prerequisite for many for achieving sustainable development. Needless to say, such peaceful uses must adopt the highest standards of safety and security agreed upon at the international level and be placed under the International Atomic Energy Agency control system, in accordance with the enforced comprehensive safeguards regime.

That both ensures States' rights to the peaceful use of nuclear energy and also that such use does not conceal other, non-peaceful purposes.

Accelerated technological progress in cyberspace is a major challenge that will require a greater collective effort to build an effective mechanism for addressing the threat of the use of cyberspace by terrorist groups. With regard to outer space, we stress the importance of disarmament and highlight the right of all States to use outer space for peaceful purposes. We believe that all international efforts should focus on regulating that right rather than on constraining it.

In conclusion, I assure you, Sir, of my delegation's full support and cooperation, and we look forward to working closely with all delegations during the current session under your guidance.

Mr. Vujić (Serbia): I join my colleagues in congratulating you, Sir, and the other members of the Bureau on your election to your respective posts. I also take this opportunity to assure you of the full support of my delegation as you discharge your important duties.

The Republic of Serbia aligns itself with the statement made on behalf of the European Union earlier in this year's debate (see A/C.1/71/PV.2). However, I shall take a few moments to highlight some of my country's priorities and actions that we have taken with respect to some of the important issues on our agenda.

The global security environment has been in a state of flux for the past several years, and the problems that have emerged as a result continue to multiply and become more complex, making them a challenge for the international community to address and resolve. In a world of rising interdependence and complexity, no country has remained unaffected, particularly by the spread of terrorism and the proliferation of weapons of mass destruction. As a result, issues related to arms control, disarmament and non-proliferation have become ever more important, and the topics that we have been discussing over the past few days have become increasingly relevant. What we need now is to join forces in the quest for joint solutions, as we proceed from the premise that productive multilateralism is necessary, as well as achievable, if we all demonstrate the readiness and commitment to work together in a spirit of cooperation and compromise.

Stepping back in time to the very first session of the General Assembly and the first resolution that it adopted in January 1946, calling

“for control of atomic energy ... to ensure its use only for peaceful purposes [and] for the elimination ... of all other major weapons adaptable to mass destruction” (*resolution 1(I), para. 5 (b) and (c)*),

we can see that we are miles from the goal that we set ourselves at that time — the goal of a world without nuclear weapons. Weapons of mass destruction, proliferation and the modernization of nuclear weapons present serious challenges to international peace and stability and make it more difficult for the process of sustainable development to evolve. What we need is unity in our endeavours to build a safe and more secure world, and the first, right step in that direction is respect for existing international principles and norms in the field of disarmament, non-proliferation and arms control.

The Republic of Serbia has acceded to all key international documents in that area. We consider the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT) to be the mainstay of the structure of international security, underpinning the international non-proliferation regime and the use of nuclear energy for peaceful purposes. Non-proliferation continues to be the essence of the NPT regime. Equally important are the efforts to further improve the international verification of NPT obligations, which are aimed at upholding the integrity of the Treaty by addressing non-compliance.

Twenty years have passed since the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty (CTBT) was opened for signature. This unique anniversary reminds us what the international community has achieved in that area, as well as what lies ahead if conditions are to be created for the implementation of the Treaty. Serbia ratified the CTBT in 2004 and joins the countries that strongly support its universal implementation at the earliest. My country is also firmly committed to full compliance with CTBT obligations, including its verification mechanism, as an effective instrument for preventing and discouraging nuclear-weapons development and proliferation. The *de facto* moratorium on nuclear testing must be maintained, but that is no substitute for the implementation of the CTBT itself, because only by implementing the Treaty can we move closer to the

goal of a nuclear-free world that we set ourselves a long time ago.

My country is a staunch supporter of strengthening the nuclear non-proliferation regime and preventing nuclear terrorism. In that connection, I take this opportunity to advise the Committee that the National Assembly of the Republic of Serbia ratified the amendments to the Convention on the Physical Protection of Nuclear Material last March, and the amendments entered into force last May. Regulating nuclear security at the national level is of paramount importance, as it provides a legal basis for the adoption of the vulnerability assessment and physical protection systems. That adoption is expected to help us achieve our long-term goals, including the strengthening of professional capacities in the field of nuclear security and the continued implementation of international conventions in that area.

The topics related to the challenges presented by chemical, biological, radiological and nuclear (CBRN) technologies and materials are also very important. This year, the Republic of Serbia acceded to the Group of Friends of CBRN Risk Mitigation and Security Governance, established by Georgia, Morocco and the Philippines, with the aim of integrating that component into the structure of international security. Currently, my country is in the process of finalizing its own CBRN national action plan.

The Republic of Serbia continues to attach great importance to compliance with the provisions of Security Council resolution 1540 (2004) and the adoption of legal and regulatory mechanisms for the prevention of the proliferation of weapons of mass destruction and their means of delivery and, especially, of their acquisition by non-State actors. By actively participating in the Group of Friends of the resolution, we are following the process of its comprehensive revision. Our national plan for its implementation is expected to be upgraded accordingly. As the country that held the chairmanship of the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE) in 2015 and that is a member of the OSCE Troika this year, the Republic of Serbia accorded special attention to the implementation of resolution 1540 (2004) in the OSCE area, which is a positive example of cooperation among international organizations in the field of the non-proliferation of weapons of mass destruction.

My country is committed to fully implementing the Chemical Weapons Convention and the Biological Weapons Convention (BWC). We believe that the forthcoming eighth BWC Review Conference, to be held in Geneva in November, will provide the parties to the Convention with an opportunity to define and adopt measures to strengthen its implementation.

The illicit trade in conventional weapons continues to threaten regional and international security and stability and to affect the lives of millions of people all over the world. To counter that phenomenon and its consequences, Serbia continues to actively support the global implementation of the Arms Trade Treaty (ATT). Representatives of my country took part in the second Conference of States Parties to the Arms Trade Treaty, held recently in Geneva. In line with its national obligations under the Treaty, my country submitted its initial and first annual national reports.

We believe that a regional approach to cooperation in the field of arms export control, including cooperation in compliance with ATT obligations, is very important. In that context, the countries of the Western Balkans have established an effective regional cooperation mechanism in the area of small arms and light weapons export control, which makes an invaluable contribution to regional confidence-building, the transfer of knowledge, best practices and information exchange. Another important example of successful subregional cooperation that should also be mentioned is the implementation of the Agreement on Sub-Regional Arms Control, based on article IV of the Dayton Peace Accords. Concluded 10 years ago, it continues to be implemented even after the completion in December 2014 of the term of office of the OSCE Personal Representative, at which time the States parties to the Agreement — Bosnia and Herzegovina, Croatia, Montenegro and Serbia — took over the competencies and responsibilities for its continued implementation. The Agreement is a practical embodiment of an arms control model that could be successfully implemented in other regions and which, commensurate with the regions' specific needs, has a transregional appeal.

Last but not least, in a few words, I would like to address the calls made in recent days with regard to the need to reactivate the Conference on Disarmament (CD) in Geneva as the main multilateral negotiating body in the area of disarmament. It is my country's earnest hope that the Conference will finally consider another substantive issue of special importance for

my country — the expansion of its membership. It is certainly needed, because the issues on the CD agenda are very important to a much larger number of countries than the current 65 CD member States. They are universal in nature and should be discussed and negotiated on a non-discriminatory, transparent and multilateral basis, and every country that wants to should be given an opportunity to participate in the process and assume its share of responsibility. Clear political will is necessary in order to overcome the current impasse, resume serious discussion of the substantive issues and make a credible contribution to international peace and security. To that end, the Republic of Serbia stands ready to make its own active contribution.

Mr. Pung (Estonia): First, let me congratulate you, Sir, on assuming the chairship of the First Committee at its seventy-first session. You can be assured of my delegation's support and cooperation as you fulfil your mandate.

Aligning our delegation fully with the statement made by the observer of the European Union (see A/C.1/71/PV.2), I would like to highlight some specific issues to which Estonia attaches particular importance at this year's session of the First Committee.

In too many parts of the world today, we find conflicts that are either emerging, raging or frozen. If we do not take control, the ongoing conflicts that we see around the world will breed terrorism, which knows no boundaries. The security situation in Europe and beyond is a source of great concern. For the first time since the Second World War, Europe's borders have been changed by the use of force and continued aggressive actions against the sovereignty, territorial integrity and independence of Ukraine. Not all of today's conflicts and crises could have been prevented, yet the effects of many could have been mitigated had we acted sooner, had the proper mechanisms to resolve them been in place and had existing international law and regimes been strengthened and effectively implemented. That is why, in order to enhance global security and stability, the international community must strive to make progress towards the universalization, effective implementation and strengthening of existing international disarmament, arms control and non-proliferation instruments and regimes.

The Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT) is and will remain the true cornerstone of global efforts to pursue nuclear disarmament,

non-proliferation and the peaceful use of nuclear energy. That is why it is important to stress that any nuclear disarmament initiatives should be in conformity with the NPT and should work to strengthen the regime. On the other hand, the idea of the nuclear-weapon prohibition treaties threatens to undermine the NPT. It is delusional to try to implement a ban without the consent of the nuclear-weapon States or a strong verification mechanism and without taking into account the security environment. Estonia shares the ultimate goals of nuclear disarmament — a world without nuclear weapons. However, we note with concern the absence of consensus on achieving that shared goal. We support a realistic, progressive approach to nuclear disarmament and continue to believe that the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty is already enshrined in the NPT as the last step in achieving our shared goal of a world without nuclear weapons.

Estonia remains deeply concerned about the long-standing deadlock in the Conference on Disarmament (CD). The CD's agenda encompasses global concerns, and the beliefs of those concerned should be negotiated on a non-discriminatory, transparent and multilateral basis, with the broad participation of interested States. I would like to reiterate Estonia's request to participate fully and equally in disarmament discussions as a full member of the CD. The Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty is a vital multilateral instrument for international disarmament and non-proliferation, and it is therefore deeply regrettable that today, as we mark the twentieth anniversary of the opening for signature of the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty, the Treaty has still not yet entered into force. Welcoming the recent ratifications of the Treaty by Myanmar and Swaziland, we urge all States, particularly those whose adherence is required for the CTBT to enter into force, to sign and ratify the Treaty without further delay.

My delegation was also among those that sponsored Security Council resolution 2310 (2016), adopted on 23 September. The proliferation of nuclear weapons and other weapons of mass destruction poses a very serious threat. We condemn in the strongest possible terms all of the nuclear tests conducted by the Democratic People's Republic of Korea, and its ongoing activity further developing its nuclear weapons and ballistic-missile programmes. It will also be crucial to ensure that the Democratic People's Republic of Korea changes its course and returns to compliance with its international obligations.

We also condemn in the strongest terms any use of chemical weapons in Syria or elsewhere, by anyone, including non-State actors, and under any circumstances. There must be accountability for such horrendous attacks, and we should expect a firm draft resolution from the First Committee on the implementation of the Chemical Weapons Convention. We welcome the successful removal of chemical weapons from Libya for destruction outside the country as a positive development that illustrates the relevance of the Organization for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons in dealing with the risks posed by non-State actors and terrorists. We note with concern that ballistic missiles and related technologies are still used around the world as operational weapons. In that regard, we believe that missile technology control regimes and The Hague Code of Conduct play a central role in preventing missile proliferation. We believe that Estonia's membership in the Missile Technology Control Regime (MTCR) will strengthen the regime and international non-proliferation efforts. We also call on all European Union member States to join the MTCR, since they all meet the regime's highest standards and criteria.

With regard to security in cyberspace, Estonia is a member of the Group of Governmental Experts on Developments in the Field of Information and Telecommunications in the Context of International Security for the fourth consecutive time. The current Group is expected to take us beyond the previously agreed-on provisions. The Group has been a very productive forum that could be a useful instrument in future, not only for studying cyberthreats and possible remedies, but also for implementing different existing international laws and norms, rules and principles. We could invite all countries to share their views on implementing its proposals with the First Committee. For Estonia, international law is the main authority on the use of information and communications technology. We must therefore strive for clear norms not only to reduce the risk of intolerable practices, but also to provide transparency and predictable behaviour, thereby allowing us to focus on peace rather than conflict.

My country is determined to support humanitarian demining and mine action. We have increased our contributions to that cause over the past few years and continue to do so. They include lending financial support to the Mine Action Service, cleaning up various explosive remnants of war and conducting

mine-clearance activities under several bilateral and international humanitarian projects. We urge all States that have not yet done so to join the Anti-Personnel Mine Ban Treaty.

As regards the current conflicts and crises, it is important to ensure that women and girls do not fall victim to gender-based violence and are included in conflict-resolution and peace negotiations. It is therefore vital to continue to implement Security Council resolution 1325 (2000) and other related resolutions on women and peace and security.

Estonia is determined to contribute to the efforts of the international community to strengthen the implementation of existing disarmament arms control instruments, such as the Convention on Certain Conventional Weapons, the Biological Weapons Convention, Security Council resolution 1540 (2004), the Arms Trade Treaty and the United Nations Programme of Action to Prevent, Combat and Eradicate the Illicit Trade in Small Arms and Light Weapons in All Its Aspects. We must seize the opportunity to strengthen those instruments during the various review processes to be held over the next year.

Mr. Gone (Côte d'Ivoire) (*spoke in French*): On behalf of the delegation of Côte d'Ivoire, I would like to warmly congratulate you, Sir, on your election to chair the First Committee. I believe that, given your experience and leadership, the work of the Committee will indeed prove successful.

My delegation aligns itself with the statements made by the representatives of Indonesia, on behalf of the Movement of Non-Aligned Countries, and Nigeria, on behalf of the Group of African States (see A/C.1/71. PV.2).

As in previous years, our Committee's work begins this year in an international security environment that remains a source of concern. Terrorism is rearing its head once again and nuclear weapons continue to attract a great deal of attention. Violence perpetrated with the aid of small arms and light weapons remains a subject of deep concern. Large movements of foreign fighters continue to be seen in some parts of the world. The goal of achieving peace and security therefore remains elusive.

We had hoped that as tensions around the world were quelled, there would be a substantial decline in the incidence of terrorism. On the contrary, however, there

has been an alarming rise in the number of terrorist attacks. No region has been spared. On 13 March, my country became a victim of this deadly barbarism with an attack carried out at the seaside resort of Grand-Bassam. The attack left 19 dead and 33 injured, including citizens of other countries. Following that attack, the Government of Côte d'Ivoire took vigorous measures. It established a special investigative counter-terrorism unit, bolstered security at our maritime boundaries by acquiring three patrol vessels, enhanced cooperation with the police forces of neighbouring countries in order to apprehend those responsible for the attack and adopted a draft law on money-laundering and the financing of terrorism.

In line with its measures to prevent and curb terrorism, on 3 July my country adopted a counter-terrorism law. This meeting is an opportunity for my delegation to urge the international community to mobilize against terrorism and to be resolute and determined in combating it before it inflicts irreparable damage and trauma on our countries and societies. In that regard, I would like to commend the effective cooperation we have had with INTERPOL, the countries of the subregion and other friendly countries that have assisted us. My delegation would also like to take this opportunity to express its gratitude to the Committee against Terrorism and in particular its Executive Secretary, who visited Côte d'Ivoire last June to show compassion and support to the Government.

In spite of the various treaties relating to small arms and light weapons, including the Arms Trade Treaty, their proliferation continues to be a concern, owing to the many victims that such weapons claim each year. Studies show that today more than 600 million light weapons are scattered throughout the world, with Africa alone accounting for several hundred million. The armed conflicts that such weapons fuel are responsible for more than 50,000 deaths each year. My country ratified the Arms Trade Treaty and hopes that its entry into force will help to improve the regulation and transparency of the international trade in conventional arms. Côte d'Ivoire would like to commend the cooperation between Japan and the United Nations Development Programme in the marking and tracing of weapons belonging to Côte d'Ivoire's defence and security forces, as well as its cooperation with the United Nations in the disarmament, demobilization and reintegration process that has been carried out since 30 June 2015.

With regard to nuclear weapons and other weapons of mass destruction, my delegation remains attentive to the discussions on that subject and would like to urge all stakeholders to make progress in the talks. Regarding the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty, my Government encourages all parties to work towards its implementation and, in particular, urges the countries listed in annex 2 to ratify the Treaty without further delay. The nuclear tests conducted in recent years point to the urgent need for the States Members of the United Nations to pay special attention to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons and to commit to strengthening its three pillars — nuclear disarmament, the non-proliferation of nuclear weapons and the use of nuclear energy for peaceful purposes.

This year, the Government of Côte d'Ivoire ratified the Convention on the Prohibition of the Development, Production and Stockpiling of Biological Weapons and a Comprehensive Safeguards Agreement with the International Atomic Energy Agency. It also accepted the Convention on Prohibitions or Restrictions on the Use of Certain Conventional Weapons Which May Be Deemed to Be Excessively Injurious or to Have Indiscriminate Effects, and expressed its consent to be bound by Protocol V. My country firmly believes that a world free of nuclear weapons and other weapons of mass destruction will be safer for us all. In conclusion, I would like to state that my delegation believes that our work makes a significant contribution to the cause of peace and security in the world.

Mr. Andanje (Kenya): I would like to begin by congratulating you, Sir, on your assumption of the chairmanship of the First Committee. I assure you of the support and cooperation of my delegation. We look forward to fruitful deliberations under your leadership.

Kenya aligns itself with the statements delivered last week by the representatives of Indonesia, on behalf of the Movement of Non-Aligned Countries, and Nigeria, on behalf of the Group of African States (see A/C.1/71/PV.2).

As many of the concerns and interests of my delegation were comprehensively highlighted in the statements made on behalf of the Non-Aligned Movement and the African Group, I will be brief and spare members the agony of repetition. I would like to draw attention to some recent developments in the field of international security that should be of concern to all of us. Before I do so, I take this opportunity to

reaffirm Kenya's long-standing commitment to nuclear disarmament, non-proliferation and the achievement of a world free of nuclear weapons.

Unfortunately, nuclear disarmament has stalled, as reflected in the 20-year paralysis in the Conference on Disarmament (CD). The CD's continued existence as a meaningful international forum for nuclear disarmament has been irretrievably undermined. The CD member States are unable to agree on even the most pressing arms control measures and other urgent matters. There is no forward movement on any front. There is a total lack of progress on the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT), a fact underlined by the failure of the NPT Review Conference in May 2015. Nuclear-weapon States that are parties to the Treaty have demonstrated no willingness to honour their obligations. Good faith is absent. With regard to the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty, and in particular the States listed in annex 2, some nuclear-weapon States have not yet ratified the Treaty, while others have yet to accede to it, despite the impassioned appeal by the Secretary-General last month.

Kenya considers such developments depressing. We are convinced that the situation is further compounded by the growing chasm between reality and the rhetorical facade of commitment to disarmament. It is indeed surreal. Military expenditures are being ramped up to maintain and modernize nuclear weapons. New land, sea and air strategic delivery systems are being built. We see an unprecedented expansion of nuclear capabilities. That is in spite of the fact that the current global stockpile of nuclear weapons is powerful enough to obliterate the world. Clearly, what we are seeing is an arms race, not disarmament. Nuclear-weapon States are determined to maintain the status quo and, above all, their overwhelming military dominance.

Those developments are taking place against the background of a deepening geopolitical crisis and increasing tension and confrontation in the world. Policies prioritizing the pre-emptive use of nuclear weapons are being promoted and are an integral part of the global strategy of military alliances. It is apparent that our efforts to advance our collective nuclear disarmament goals are receding.

Today, the world faces innumerable challenges. Kenya believes that there is absolutely no justification for spending obscene amounts of resources — trillions of dollars — when there are many higher-priority issues

that deserve our attention. An issue such as climate change is an immediate emergency. It has far-reaching effects, both geographically and for the generations to come. The refugee crisis that is the cause of social dislocation in some regions of the world is another urgent problem. Global inequality is reaching new extremes. Oxfam recently pointed out that power and privilege are being used to skew the economic system to increase the gap between the richest and the rest.

My delegation believes that disarmament and development are interrelated. Not only can disarmament further the cause of development, we are convinced that development can further the cause of disarmament. We must not succumb to the relentless pressure to increase military expenditure at the expense of social programmes, especially education and health. Resources spent on weapons are also a drain on national economies. Efforts must be made to release resources from military spending for use in addressing social priorities such as the growing gap of inequality, the underlying economic and social causes of conflict, and climate change.

Ms. Scott (Namibia): I would like to congratulate you, Sir, on your assumption of the chairship of the First Committee at the seventy-first session. We stand ready to cooperate fully with you and your team in the discharge of your current assignment to advance the work of the First Committee.

I would first like to offer Namibia's heartfelt condolences to the people of Haiti following the landfall last week of Hurricane Matthew, in which more than 900 people lost their lives. Moreover, the hurricane's destruction of crucial social and economic infrastructure is bound to hamper that country's efforts to implement the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development.

Namibia associates itself with the statements delivered on behalf of the Movement of Non-Aligned Countries and the Group of African States (see A/C.1/71/PV.2).

We also wish to take this opportunity to welcome the ratification of the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty by Angola, Swaziland and Myanmar. Namibia believes in the non-selective implementation of the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT) and the peaceful use of nuclear energy as key to disarmament. In that regard, we reiterate our strong commitment to multilateralism. We look forward with optimism to the forthcoming start to the review cycle

of the NPT in Vienna in 2017, as well as to the next NPT Review Conference, scheduled for 2020. Namibia further supports the noble position adopted by the International Court of Justice in its 1996 advisory opinion, which is that the use or threat of use of nuclear weapons is contrary to the rules of international law in armed conflicts and violates the principles and rules of international humanitarian law. In that context, we join the call for the de-legitimization of all nuclear weapons. A belief in military doctrines based on the myth that national security can be advanced through nuclear deterrence is counter-productive and contrary to the spirit of the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons.

The threat to humankind posed by the existence of nuclear weapons and their continued testing, including underground or underwater, as well as their possible use or threat of use, is still very real. We remain concerned about the difficult and complex situation in the field of disarmament and international security. It is therefore important to ensure that efforts aimed at nuclear non-proliferation are conducted alongside simultaneous efforts aimed at nuclear disarmament. The total elimination of nuclear weapons is the only absolute guarantee against their use or threat of uses.

The nuclear-weapon-free zones created by the Treaties of Tlatelolco, Rarotonga, Bangkok, Pelindaba, the Treaty on a Nuclear-Weapon-Free Zone in Central Asia, as well as Mongolia's nuclear-weapon-free status, are positive and important steps towards strengthening global nuclear disarmament and nuclear non-proliferation. In that connection, Namibia fully supports the establishment in the Middle East of a zone free of nuclear weapons and all other weapons of mass destruction.

With regard to outer-space activities, the common interests of all humankind and the inalienable, legitimate sovereign right of all States to the exploration and use of outer space for exclusively peaceful purposes should be recognized. We oppose and reject any act denying or violating the peaceful uses of outer space for the benefit of humankind. Namibia reiterates the inalienable right of developing countries to develop, research, produce and use nuclear energy for peaceful purposes, without discrimination. However, there is concern about the fact that undue restrictions on exports to developing countries of material, equipment and technology for peaceful purposes continue to persist.

As one of the world's biggest producers of uranium, Namibia is actively participating in International Atomic Energy Agency activities for promoting the peaceful uses of nuclear material for the treatment of cancer, agricultural production and energy generation. We therefore believe that the production and possession of nuclear materials other than for peaceful uses is not a sustainable guarantee of security. Namibia supports and commends all nuclear-weapon States and urges them to take the requisite steps that can eventually help to reduce nuclear proliferation and, ultimately, nuclear disarmament. Lastly, Namibia welcomes the successful conclusion of nuclear negotiations between the Islamic Republic of Iran and the EU3+3, resulting in the finalization of the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action on 14 July 2015. We look forward to its complete implementation.

Mr. Dehghani (Iran): I would like to express my warm congratulations to you, Sir, on your election to the chairship of the First Committee and to assure you of the full cooperation of my delegation. We are happy that this important session of the Committee is being held under the guidance of a wise and experienced diplomat from Algeria, whose dedication to the cause of disarmament is well known.

My delegation associates itself with the statement made previously by the representative of Indonesia on behalf of the Movement of Non-Aligned Countries (see A/C.1/71/PV.2).

Nuclear disarmament remains the main priority on the disarmament and international security agenda. The mere existence of nuclear weapons is a threat to and a source of distrust in international relations. It undermines the principle enshrined in the Charter of the United Nations of the equal right of all States to peace and security and the foundation of international humanitarian law. Nuclear disarmament is a vital undertaking because inaction could lead to a global catastrophe. Along with reaffirming the commitment to nuclear disarmament, States need the necessary political will to fulfil that objective. Seven decades after the first use of atomic weapons, which caused a humanitarian disaster that killed more than 200,000 people, there is no absolute guarantee that such weapons will not be used again.

Thousands of nuclear weapons that are associated with military strategies, and with war plans that contemplate the use of such weapons under certain

circumstances, continue to exist in the arsenals of nuclear-weapon States and other possessors. That is because nuclear-weapon States are not complying with their nuclear-disarmament obligations. Almost half a century after the conclusion of the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT), under which all States parties have an explicit legal obligation to achieve the total elimination of nuclear weapons, a wide gap remains between that nominal commitment and its implementation in practice. Upholding the integrity and credibility of the NPT depends on the full implementation of all the obligations it carries, particularly the obligation pertaining to nuclear disarmament.

Even more disappointing is the fact that, in contradiction to the nuclear-weapon States' commitment to diminishing the role of nuclear weapons in their military doctrine, multibillion-dollar programmes for modernizing and replacing nuclear arsenals and developing new types of advanced nuclear-weapon systems are under way, particularly in France, the United Kingdom and the United States. They should clearly be held accountable for such wilful non-compliance with their obligations under article VI of the NPT. The grave risks and ramifications of persistent non-compliance with such obligations should not be taken lightly. Those countries must stop violating their nuclear disarmament obligations. We will continue to express our deep concern in that regard in the appropriate international forums.

The lack of progress in the implementation of the very commitments that nuclear-weapon States have already embraced within the context of the NPT Review Conferences has rendered the so-called step-by-step approach to nuclear disarmament ineffective. That approach is not working and will not lead to a world free of nuclear weapons. We base our verdict on the facts, since no multilateral nuclear-disarmament negotiations have taken place in the past two decades, owing to the persistent rejection of any proposal to commence nuclear disarmament negotiations in the Conference on Disarmament. Even the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty, with all its loopholes, is still in limbo, and the politically motivated attempts by a certain country to exploit the Security Council in order to adopt a resolution on the Treaty are neither legitimate nor a solution.

A subversive approach has failed to even establish and consolidate a legally binding global norm against

nuclear-weapons testing and production and the supply of fissile material for nuclear weapons. Those who continue to insist on the failed step-by-step approach to nuclear disarmament should note that they are insisting on a recipe for ensuring the indefinite retention of nuclear weapons, which is certainly contrary to the legal obligation specified in article VI of the NPT. We believe that the most effective and practical way of achieving the complete abolition of nuclear weapons within a specific time frame, and sustaining a world free of nuclear weapons, is to negotiate and bring to a conclusion a comprehensive nuclear-weapon convention that brings together all the necessary aspects of nuclear disarmament by prohibiting the possession, development, production, acquisition, testing, stockpiling, transfer, use or threat of use of nuclear weapons and by providing for their irreversible and verifiable destruction. That is why the Islamic Republic of Iran strongly supports the Non-Aligned Movement's proposal for the early commencement of negotiations on a comprehensive nuclear-weapon convention in the Conference on Disarmament.

Iran has a strong interest in a commitment to the non-proliferation of nuclear weapons and has been at the forefront of regional and international efforts to achieve the universality of the NPT. As is well known, in 1974 Iran proposed the establishment of a nuclear-weapon-free zone in the Middle East. It was strongly supported by the international community, and numerous resolutions and decisions on its realization were subsequently adopted by the General Assembly and the NPT Review Conferences. But the Israeli regime, which possesses nuclear weapons, blocked the establishment of that zone, and it continues to stand in the way of all international and regional efforts to fulfil that goal.

Members may recall that the 2015 NPT Review Conference was unfortunately unable to adopt a final document, mainly because of an external factor — the pressure from a non-party to the NPT, the Israeli regime, on certain States parties to the NPT that in the end objected to the adoption of the outcome document. This happened because the outcome document included a decision on a nuclear-weapon-free zone in the Middle East. Nuclear weapons in the hands of the Israeli regime, which has repeatedly committed acts of aggression, occupation, genocide and terrorism, pose a most dangerous threat to the security of the non-nuclear-weapon States in the Middle East that are

parties to the NPT. That situation cannot be sustained. The Israeli regime must therefore be compelled to accede to the Treaty and to other major treaties banning weapons of mass destruction, as a non-nuclear-weapon party, without any conditions or further delays.

We recognize the legitimate right of States to have access to the arms they need for their self-defence. At the same time, we are deeply concerned about the continuous flow of sophisticated conventional offensive weapons to the volatile region of the Middle East and, in particular, to those countries that are engaged in aggression against others, in violation of international humanitarian law. We are referring to Israel and to Saudi Arabia, which has been waging a brutal war in Yemen for more than a year now, killing thousands of civilians and destroying civilian infrastructure, such as schools and hospitals, in massive and indiscriminate air strikes that use United States and United Kingdom arms and munitions. In its latest atrocity, on Saturday, 8 October, Saudi Arabia twice bombed a funeral gathering, killing around 150 civilians and wounding almost 600. That appalling carnage was a brazen violation of international humanitarian law. We strongly urge the arms-exporting countries to comply fully with their obligations under international humanitarian law and to stop selling arms and providing logistical and military assistance to Saudi Arabia and the United Arab Emirates in their aggression against Yemen. Ironically, the so-called champions of human rights in international forums take a holiday when it comes to the oppressed peoples of Yemen and Palestine.

In conclusion, we are facing a difficult and complex situation in the field of international security and disarmament, but we will continue to proceed with hope and perseverance in the pursuit of our disarmament goals. Securing a world without nuclear weapons will remain our highest priority. That is our common responsibility. Let us resolutely work together to that end. Let us destroy all inhumane weapons before they destroy all of us. Let us collectively call upon all nuclear-weapon possessors to fulfil all their legal obligations with respect to nuclear disarmament. Let us be responsible and live up to our ethical and moral responsibility to build a safer world for all nations and generations. The Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action proved that, with serious and sustained diplomacy, solutions to technically and politically complex issues are within reach, even at difficult times for international security. We hope that our deliberations in the

Committee will contribute to upholding internationally agreed principles and to the advancement of our common objectives.

Ms. McCarney (Canada): Let me congratulate you, Sir, and the members of the Bureau on your election and assure you of the full support of my delegation in the important work of the Committee. I will be delivering an abridged version of Canada's statement to facilitate expeditious First Committee proceedings, but a full version of our statement will be provided to the Secretariat.

I take the floor today amid both enduring and emerging threats to our collective security and global peace. Such threats include the proliferation, use and potential use of weapons of mass destruction; conflicts and crises in Syria, Ukraine and South Sudan; the Democratic People's Republic of Korea's provocative and reckless actions; and the proliferation of conventional small arms and light weapons. These all demand our urgent attention. In the face of such pressing challenges, we need a revitalized commitment to advancing non-proliferation, arms control and disarmament goals.

While Canada and many other States feel the need to move forward on nuclear non-proliferation and disarmament issues, the system designed to do that continues to fail us. We are particularly disheartened that, after 20 years, the Conference on Disarmament remains unable to start negotiations on a fissile material cut-off treaty (FMCT), despite recent efforts to achieve a breakthrough. For that reason, Canada, Germany and the Netherlands intend to introduce a draft resolution this year that aims to build on the report of the Group of Governmental Experts to make recommendations on possible aspects that could contribute to but not negotiate a treaty banning the production of fissile material for nuclear weapons or other nuclear explosive devices (see A/70/81) and make serious progress towards FMCT negotiations. And while we fully expect that the eventual negotiation of such a treaty will be lengthy and complex, Canada will do everything possible to facilitate that process.

Canada engaged constructively in the Open-ended Working Group taking forward multilateral nuclear disarmament negotiations and regretted that the States possessing nuclear weapons did not join the conversation. We also share others' disappointment over the fact that the Group was unable to reach a consensus

on the final report. Moreover, we are deeply concerned that a key recommendation of the Open-ended Working Group report (see A/71/371) may deepen divisions on nuclear disarmament and make genuine disarmament progress more rather than less difficult.

The accelerating pace of proliferation in the Democratic People's Republic of Korea, with two nuclear tests and more than 20 ballistic-missile tests conducted so far this year, poses a very real threat to both regional and international peace and security. Those illegal actions contravene the Democratic People's Republic of Korea's own undertakings and successive Security Council resolutions. We therefore call on all States to fully and effectively implement United Nations sanctions in order to convince the Democratic People's Republic of Korea to change course and return to the negotiating table. We call on the Democratic People's Republic of Korea to take immediate and verifiable steps to denuclearize, comply with its international obligations, including the relevant Security Council resolutions, and engage meaningfully in the Six-Party Talks.

With regard to chemical weapons, there is good news about Libya. Canada welcomes the removal and complete destruction of Libya's remaining chemical weapons precursors, ensuring that they will not fall into the hands of Da'esh and other armed groups in North Africa. That marks the final chapter in a multi-year international effort to help Libya eliminate its chemical weapons programme. Preventing access to weapons of mass destruction by non-State actors, including terrorists, remains a very high priority for Canada.

The news on Syria, however, is dire. Canada is gravely concerned about the continued use of chemical weapons in Syria and by the findings of the Organization for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons-United Nations Joint Investigative Mechanism, which attributed at least two chlorine attacks to Syrian Government forces and one sulphur mustard attack to Da'esh. The perpetrators are in clear violation of the Chemical Weapons Convention, Security Council resolution 2118 (2013) and international humanitarian law, and they should be brought to justice immediately. At the same time, we commend the excellent work of the Organization for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons in verifiably destroying Syria's chemical-weapon programme. We call on Syria to fully comply with Security Council resolution 2118 (2013) in order to ensure the prompt resolution of all

ambiguities with regard to its declaration and to carry out its obligation to completely destroy its remaining chemical-weapon facilities.

(spoke in French)

The eighth Biological Weapons Convention Review Conference will be held in Geneva next month. Canada was pleased to work with the People's Republic of China and the implementation support unit for the Conference held in China last month to address key issues in preparation for the upcoming Review Conference. We believe that the Review Conference will offer a timely opportunity to strengthen the Convention's global ban on biological weapons. Canada's priority is to enhance the science and technology review process and technology under the Convention and to promote its effective implementation at the national level, in order to enable legitimate life-sciences research to continue. In addition, we appreciate the voluntary transparency activities that share best practices in implementation, building trust and leading to greater compliance with the Convention.

With regard to conventional weapons, Canada believes that the Arms Trade Treaty (ATT) is an effective response to the unregulated weapon transfers that fuel and prolong conflicts, cause regional instability, lead to violations of international humanitarian law and human rights abuses and hamper social and economic development. We are therefore committed to becoming a State party to the ATT as soon as possible.

The Anti-Personnel Mine Ban Convention has significantly contributed to the implementation of an international norm banning the use of anti-personnel mines. However, the use of such weapons persists in some regions of the world and continues to maim, and even kill, innocent people every day. The comprehensive implementation of the Ottawa Convention is the only way to end the human suffering caused by anti-personnel mines. Canada is committed to participating in efforts aimed at meeting the goal of the Maputo Declaration to implement obligations under the Convention by 2025. That will be possible only if all States parties are more committed to universalizing the Convention and to mine-action efforts. We are eagerly awaiting the next meeting of the States parties, in Santiago de Chile, which will give us an opportunity to address those challenges. In addition, Canada fully complies with the goals in the Convention on Cluster Munitions, which

seeks to reduce the devastating impact of such weapons on civilians.

Over the past decade, Canada has contributed approximately \$237 million to address the humanitarian impact of mines, cluster munitions and the explosive remnants of war. We encourage all States, including those that are not parties to the conventions I have mentioned, to refrain from using anti-personnel mines and cluster munitions, prevent their use by non-State actors in their territories and support the victims of mines and cluster munitions.

In conclusion, Canada is ready to contribute to a constructive and fruitful First Committee session. We sincerely hope to be able to achieve tangible progress with regard to this year's disarmament and non-proliferation agenda in order to strengthen international peace and security.

Ms. Janjua (Pakistan): Sir, the delegation of Pakistan is delighted to see you chairing this important session of the First Committee. We would also like to congratulate the other members of the Bureau on their assumption of office. I assure you of my delegation's full cooperation and support in the successful outcome of the work of the First Committee. We also thank the Secretariat for its support. Like you, we welcome the disarmament scholars who are with us today.

We would like to express our deepest condolences and sympathy to our colleagues, friends and brothers from Haiti following the terrible hurricane that has hit their country. We offer our support and stand by them at this difficult time.

The international security environment continues to deteriorate. Relations between States are increasingly marked by mistrust and outright friction. The numbers and sophistication of all types of armaments, including nuclear weapons, are on the rise. Most ominously, in certain cases, the unabashed pursuit of hegemonic policies and efforts to achieve military domination are creating instability at the global and regional levels. That is especially evident in our region. South Asia's security environment is blighted by one Power's insistence on hegemonic policies, its engagement in a relentless arms build-up and its myopic refusal to participate in any meaningful dialogue on security issues.

Pakistan's security was fundamentally challenged by the introduction of nuclear weapons into our neighbourhood. We were left with no option but to

follow suit in order to restore strategic stability in South Asia and deter all forms of aggression. At the same time, Pakistan has made a number of proposals for keeping South Asia free of nuclear weapons and missiles. The proposals included the simultaneous application of International Atomic Energy Agency safeguards to all nuclear facilities and bilateral arrangements for reciprocal inspections; simultaneous accession to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons, the regional comprehensive nuclear-test-ban treaty and the zero-missile regime in South Asia; and the signing of a non-aggression pact. Unfortunately, none of those proposals has met with a favourable response.

Just last month, in his address (see A/71/PV.11) to the General Assembly, our Prime Minister underlined Pakistan's resolve to maintain strategic stability in its region. Guided by a commitment to the principles of non-proliferation and with the aim of maintaining peace and stability in the region, our Prime Minister expressed readiness to agree to a bilateral arrangement between Pakistan and India on a nuclear-test ban. We are awaiting a response to that proposal. Peace and stability in South Asia cannot be achieved without the resolution of underlying disputes, including the Jammu and Kashmir dispute, an agreement on measures for nuclear and missile restraint, and the balancing of conventional forces. Our proposal for a strategic restraint regime, based on those three interlocking elements, remains on the table. We have demonstrated our commitment to peace and stability in the region. Our conduct continues to be defined by restraint and responsibility and the avoidance of an arms race.

The lack of progress on nuclear disarmament and frustration with the inactivity of the United Nations disarmament machinery are reaching a tipping point. The major divergences on the path towards nuclear disarmament have become starkly visible on two levels. On one hand, a group of States is attempting to divert attention from the fulfilment of the obligations and commitments on nuclear disarmament by proposing additional non-proliferation measures, under the so-called step-by-step, progressive and building-blocks approach. Those States are also suggesting steps that cost them nothing but carry huge implications for other States' security. On the other hand, there are moves to trivialize and exclude vital security considerations from the debate on nuclear disarmament and recast the discourse in exclusively humanitarian terms, supposedly paving the way for a ban on nuclear weapons.

In addition to taking international peace and security for granted, those initiatives go against the agreed principles enshrined in the Final Document (resolution S-10/2) of the first special session of the General Assembly devoted to disarmament. Neither of those divisive approaches — the so-called building-blocks approach and the ban approach — is likely to succeed if the major stakeholders are not brought on board. Nuclear disarmament cannot progress without addressing the substantial security concerns of all States. We need approaches that unite us in our common endeavour to achieve a nuclear-weapon-free world based on the cardinal principle of equal and undiminished security for all States. Approaches that create additional fissures are best avoided.

While progress on nuclear disarmament remains deadlocked, the relentless pursuit of selective non-proliferation measures persist. After the failure to achieve consensus on a genuinely equitable and non-discriminatory fissile material cut-off treaty in the Conference on Disarmament (CD), attempts were made, and continue to be made, to move the issue outside of the CD. The proponents of such approaches need to accept the reality that fundamental differences continue to exist on the very objectives and scope of the treaty. They are based on fundamental security concerns that can be neither glossed over nor wished away by creative drafting or innovative approaches. Absolute clarity is required on the objectives and scope of a treaty before substantive work starts on it. Pakistan is not in a position to accept any conclusions or recommendations produced by the ill-advised Group of Governmental Experts to make recommendations on possible aspects that could contribute to but not negotiate a treaty banning the production of fissile material for nuclear weapons or other nuclear explosive devices. The substantive work on a treaty has to be undertaken in the CD on the basis of an acceptable mandate. A treaty that does not address the asymmetries in the existing stockpiles of fissile material would adversely affect Pakistan's vital security interests. Pakistan's proposal on a fissile material cut-off treaty that includes existing stockpiles was circulated as an official document of the CD last year. It seeks to address the regional and global asymmetries in fissile material stockpiles and can make a genuine contribution to achieving the goal of nuclear disarmament. It does not discriminate between categories of States, and it provides a practical way forward and out of the impasse.

The existing and emerging challenges to arms control, non-proliferation and disarmament should be tackled collectively, on the basis of cooperative multilateralism. The fundamental prerequisites for global security must be appropriately addressed and include, first, the recognition of the right to equal security for all States; second, addressing the motives of States wanting to acquire weapons, including perceived threats from larger military forces, the existence of disputes with more powerful States and discrimination in the application of international norms and laws; third, a renewed commitment by the nuclear-weapon States to achieving nuclear disarmament within a reasonable time frame and within the context of a re-energized security system; fourth, evolving agreed criteria based on a non-discriminatory approach for the promotion of the peaceful uses of nuclear energy and appropriate international safeguards, in accordance with the relevant international obligations of States; fifth, pending the total elimination of nuclear weapons, the provision of effective guarantees to non-nuclear-weapon States against the use or threat of use of nuclear weapons through the conclusion of a universal, legally binding and non-discriminatory treaty in the CD; sixth, evolving a universal and non-discriminatory agreement for addressing concerns arising from the development and deployment of anti-ballistic missile systems that are inherently destabilizing, while being of dubious reliability; seventh, strengthening the international legal regime preventing the weaponization of outer space by undertaking negotiations to that effect in the CD; eighth, as a fundamental and pragmatic step towards nuclear disarmament, addressing both the past and the future production of fissile materials, through the conclusion of a non-discriminatory fissile material treaty in the CD; ninth, bringing about and bringing under appropriate international regulations and prohibitions the development and use of cyberweapons, armed drones and lethal autonomous weapons systems; tenth, addressing regional security issues through dialogue and diplomacy, including the establishment of a strategic restraint regime in South Asia, the creation of a zone free of weapons of mass destruction in the Middle East and a Korean peninsula free of nuclear weapons; and, finally, pursuing a balanced reduction of armed forces and conventional weapons. The disturbing trend in the increasing number and sophistication of conventional weapons must be halted because of its direct causal relationship with the continuing reliance on nuclear weapons.

We have put forward a long menu of ideas. That shows that there is much that we can do in the Conference on Disarmament and in other parts of the United Nations disarmament machinery. We should not blame the CD; we should blame ourselves for not moving forward.

Pakistan has positioned itself as a mainstream partner in the international non-proliferation regime, as well as in the global efforts to strengthen nuclear security and safety. We have instituted a stringent national export control system and a robust nuclear security regime that are on a par with the best international standards. Pakistan was an active and constructive participant in the Nuclear Security Summit process and has fulfilled all the requirements of Security Council resolution 1540 (2004). We will host international work groups and meetings next year in Pakistan on resolution 1540 (2004) and on the Global Initiative to Combat Nuclear Terrorism, of which Pakistan remains an active member.

The safe, secure and peaceful use of nuclear energy without discrimination is essential to economic development. Pakistan meets the international standards and criteria to gain full access to civil nuclear technology for meeting its growing energy needs and for continued economic growth. Through a series of actions in diverse areas, we have demonstrated our credentials and eligibility to join the Nuclear Suppliers Group (NSG). We expect that an approach based on non-discriminatory criteria will be taken to expand the NSG's membership, which would strengthen the non-proliferation regime in an equitable and credible manner.

Pakistan is a party to the Chemical Weapons Convention and the Biological Weapons Convention. We value the contribution they have made to international and regional peace and security by banning entire categories of weapons of mass destruction. Pakistan is actively engaged in strengthening their regimes. Pakistan will also preside over the fifth Review Conference of the Convention on Certain Conventional Weapons, being held in Geneva in December. We are counting on the support of all States parties to ensure that the Conference reaches a robust and forward-looking outcome.

Mr. Sukhee (Mongolia): I would like to congratulate you, Sir, on assuming the chairship of the First Committee, as well as the other members of the

Bureau on their election. I am confident that the First Committee will have productive deliberations under your leadership, and I assure you of my delegation's full support and cooperation.

The Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT) is the cornerstone of the nuclear disarmament and nuclear non-proliferation regime and an essential part of the global security regime. Like all other States Members of the United Nations, we note with regret that, despite all of its efforts, the 2015 NPT Review Conference fell short of reaching consensus on the substantive part of its draft final document. Nevertheless, that should not prevent us from uniting as one community to promote common peace and security, and we look forward to progress at the first Preparatory Conference for the 2020 review cycle, to be held next year.

Mongolia attaches importance to the implementation of General Assembly resolution 70/34, entitled "Follow-up to the 2013 high-level meeting of the General Assembly on nuclear disarmament". In that context, we are hopeful that its full implementation, in particular through the commencement of negotiations in the Conference on Disarmament (CD), can ensure tangible progress on nuclear disarmament. Mongolia recognizes the Conference on Disarmament as the single multilateral negotiating body on disarmament and looks forward to an early solution to the ongoing stalemate in the CD. We are hopeful that all members of the CD can demonstrate the necessary political will to enable the negotiations to commence.

Mongolia welcomes the declaration of 26 September as the International Day for the Total Elimination of Nuclear Weapons and the holding of a high-level informal plenary meeting to commemorate it. We believe that the International Day will promote accountability for disarmament obligations and enhance public awareness and education on the threat posed by nuclear weapons to humankind and the need for their total elimination. The Government of Mongolia supports the non-proliferation and disarmament initiatives and developments that seek to address the security challenges of our time, as well as the objectives of the Oslo, Vienna and Nayarit Conferences on the Humanitarian Impact of Nuclear Weapons. We believe that all of those efforts are conducive to the vigorous implementation of the Action Plan of the 2010 NPT Review Conference, which has strengthened the international nuclear non-proliferation regime.

This year marks the twentieth anniversary of the opening for signature of the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty (CTBT). In that regard, Mongolia welcomes the outcome of the twentieth-anniversary Ministerial Meeting, held in Vienna in June, and the eighth Ministerial Meeting of the Friends of the CTBT, which took place in New York in September. Mongolia, which was in fact one of the first countries to ratify the Treaty, in 1997, believes, like many other countries, that the universalization of the CTBT is a crucial step towards disarming the world of nuclear weapons. The CTBT should therefore be brought into force as soon as possible, and we call on those countries that have not yet ratified it, particularly the remaining annex 2 States, to do so without delay.

Mongolia firmly believes that the only solution to the use or threat of use of nuclear weapons, ultimately, is their total elimination. We strongly support the establishment of nuclear-weapon-free zones around the world. My delegation shares the concerns about the delay in the universalization and acceptance of the International Atomic Energy Agency's comprehensive safeguards agreements and additional protocols, and the lack of progress on the implementation of General Assembly resolution 50/73, on the risk of nuclear proliferation in the Middle East, adopted almost 20 years ago.

As a strong advocate of nuclear-weapon-free zones, Mongolia is hopeful that international efforts will yield progress in establishing a Middle East zone free of nuclear weapons. In the same spirit, we support the denuclearization of the Korean peninsula. Mongolia deeply regrets the fact that the Democratic People's Republic of Korea conducted nuclear tests this year, in violation of Security Council resolutions. Those tests have had a negative impact on the efforts of the international community to maintain international peace and security. Mongolia reaffirms its firm position for the maintenance of peace and security in North-East Asia, as well as for the promotion of international talks to that end.

As a firm advocate of nuclear disarmament and non-proliferation, Mongolia has been making efforts to contribute to international peace and security by promoting its nuclear-weapon-free status. Our status enjoys broad international recognition, as illustrated by the range of international instruments that support it, such as the final document of the 2010 NPT Review Conference, the outcome documents of the conferences

of the States parties and signatories to the treaties that have established nuclear-weapon-free zones and the biennial General Assembly resolution on Mongolia's international security and nuclear-weapon-free status, as well as the final documents of the summits and ministerial meetings of the Movement of Non-Aligned Countries. In that regard, on 17 September 2012, Mongolia signed parallel declarations with the five permanent members of the Security Council (P-5) on Mongolia's nuclear-weapon-free status. With those joint declarations, the P-5 recognized Mongolia's unique status and declared that they would respect it and refrain from contributing to any act that would violate it.

As in previous years, my delegation will present to this session of the Committee a draft resolution entitled "Mongolia's international security and nuclear weapon free status" (A/C.1/71/L.20). I hope that, as in previous years, members of the Committee will support the draft resolution and adopt it by consensus.

Mr. Ja'afari (Syrian Arab Republic) (*spoke in Arabic*): First, allow me to say how delighted I am to see a sister country chairing the proceedings of the First Committee. I would therefore like to congratulate you, Sir, on your election. I also congratulate the members of the Bureau.

My country aligns itself with the statement made by the representative of Indonesia on behalf of the Movement of Non-Aligned Countries (see A/C.1/71/PV.2).

Our world is facing multiple challenges, at the forefront of which is the threat of the proliferation of weapons of mass destruction, particularly nuclear weapons. Some nuclear-weapon States threaten other countries with the possibility that nuclear weapons will be used against them. In addition, Israel's non-adherence to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT) contributes to its lack of universality. However, the most serious threat that we face today is the support, arming, training and funding by some countries, including members of the Security Council, of terrorist groups that use chemical weapons.

The call by a majority of the States Members of the United Nations for Israel to join the NPT is based on a deep conviction, shared by all, that Israel will not join the NPT as long as the United States, the United Kingdom, France, Canada, Germany and Australia sponsor its nuclear programme and assist with its development

and enhancement. On top of Israel's refusal to apply and implement nuclear-disarmament resolutions, the failure of the 2015 NPT Review Conference amounted to a moral scandal, since it ensured that Israel could continue to possess nuclear weapons and not join the NPT. That is a flagrant violation of all of the Treaty's provisions and articles and a concrete example of the nuclear hypocrisy practised by the United States and the United Kingdom. In that regard, we call on Council members to declare the Middle East a zone free of nuclear weapons and other weapons of mass destruction. We also recall the initiative along those lines submitted by Syria in 2003, when it was a member of the Security Council, and we call on the Council to adopt it today. My country stresses the inalienable right of States parties to the NPT, in accordance with article IV of the Treaty, to possess and develop nuclear technology for peaceful purposes. We are against any interpretation of the text that is contrary to that right or that attempts to limit or constrain its scope.

My country condemns, in the strongest terms, the crime of the use of chemical weapons. We believe that the use of weapons of mass destruction, including chemical weapons, is unacceptable and immoral and should be denounced. We have joined the Chemical Weapons Convention, based on our conviction of the need to free the Middle East from all weapons of mass destruction, in particular nuclear weapons. We have demonstrated to the whole world our commitment to stand against the use of chemical weapons. We have respected and upheld all of our obligations under those treaties, despite the difficult circumstances that we face in our country today. The third, non-final, report (see S/2016/738) by the Joint Investigative Mechanism, which levels accusations at Syria, specifically regarding the use of chlorine in Talmenes and Sarmin, is full of structural gaps and inconsistencies that compel us to reject all of the report's findings. Nonetheless, a few countries have used that non-final report to continue to make accusations about Syria. I shall now mention some of those inconsistencies.

First, the report does not provide any physical evidence of the use of chemical materials or the party that used them, although all of the regions that were investigated by the Mechanism lie in the hands of and are under the control of terrorist groups.

Secondly, the report does not include any documented medical information on the casualties or on the people who claimed to have been exposed to toxic

materials. Nonetheless, those who were injured — or allegedly injured — were transferred to, and treated in, medical centres under the control of terrorist groups or in Turkey.

Thirdly, the report clearly states that the videos on the Talmenes incident were filmed on 23 April 2014, but the alleged accident took place on 21 April 2014. That is proof that the video was fabricated in order to be used as a tool for levelling accusations against Syria.

Fourthly, according to paragraph 42 of the report, materials containing TNT were detected, based on tests and analyses. There is no logical explanation for the presence of such materials, since that type of explosive material is not commonly used in chemical weapons. The analysis itself was inadequate and did not support any conclusions that chemical missiles were used.

That is some of the evidence that we have — and there is much more — that can prove that there are inconsistencies in the Joint Investigative Mechanism's third report. We have sent those remarks to the Joint Investigative Mechanism and to the Security Council. The report was built around the findings claiming the likelihood of the use of chlorine by Syria and was based on false testimony, supported either by terrorist groups or by the societies harbouring such groups. In fact, we believe that the content of the report is blatant proof that the sponsors of terrorist groups fabricate evidence. In that regard, I can give an example.

Recently, the United States Ron Paul Institute for Peace and Prosperity revealed that the Pentagon had paid \$540 million to a British public-relations firm, called Bell Pottinger, that provides services, inter alia, to Saudi Arabia and Chile. That sum of money was to be used to create anti-Syrian Government propaganda or, in other words, to fabricate images, pictures and videos on the use of chemical or non-chemical weapons in Syria. The Ron Paul Institute for Peace and Prosperity is the source of that information. I would also like to refer to the press conference held by the Russian Defence Minister, who spoke about the intentions of terrorist groups in Syria to use chemical weapons against Syrian armed forces and civilians. On 13 September, Syrian authorities learned that such materials had arrived in Aleppo. They were moved and stored six metres under ground in the city of Saraqib, in Idlib governorate. The materials included one ton of yellow phosphorus. Two United States citizens who are chemical experts were seen on 6 September returning to Turkey after

preparing the chemical materials. However, one expert, Mahmoud Hussein Abdullah, remained in that country in order to take special training sessions on the use of chemical weapons, under the supervision of the United States and Israel. He also remained in order to oversee the missiles being filled with chemical materials.

In July and September, almost 14 tons of toxic material arrived in Syria from neighbouring countries, including vehicles containing toxic gas capable of producing mass devastation and destruction. We conveyed that information to the Security Council, the Joint Investigative Mechanism and the Committee established pursuant to resolution 1540 (2004). My country has sent 63 letters to the Secretary-General, the Security Council, the Joint Investigative Mechanism and the Security Council's 1540 Committee. In our first letter at the end of 2012, nearly four months before the chemical attack on Khan Al-Assal, we spoke about our fear that the countries that sponsored terrorism were providing chemical weapons to terrorist groups and would later claim that Syria used such weapons.

We have cautioned and issued warnings against the complacency and reluctance shown in addressing the situation. We also warned against such weapons falling into the hands of the Al-Nusra Front and Al-Qaida-related groups, especially since they control a private factory in the east of Aleppo that contains tons of chlorine. We also witnessed the propaganda and videos about the threat of use of chemical weapons by Al-Qaida against the Syrian people and later claims that it was the Syrian Government that had used such weapons. Since the Joint Investigative Mechanism was established, we have sent more than 25 letters about the use of toxic materials against civilians and the military by terrorist groups. We also mentioned that Da'esh was supplied with 12 barrels of toxic chemical materials from sources in Turkey and Saudi Arabia.

Our borders have not been safe. We have seen the arrival of toxic chemical materials from Saudi Arabia via the border with Jordan. We informed the Joint Investigative Mechanism and the Security Council of Qatar's involvement in supplying such material and of the chlorine gas and support provided to the terrorist groups in such areas. We warned that Syria would be accused of the use of such materials. We insist on the need for all countries to uphold their obligations to stop the smuggling of weapons and ammunition, be it lethal or non-lethal, and to stop funding armed and terrorist groups across borders. We warn that, sooner or later,

the scourge of terrorism will have repercussions on those countries and on other countries in the area.

The Chair: I shall now give the floor to those delegations that have asked to exercise the right of reply. In that regard, I would like to remind all delegations that the first intervention is limited to 10 minutes and the second to five minutes.

Ms. Sehayek-Soroka (Israel): I am compelled to take the floor following the outrageous accusations that were directed at my country earlier today by the representative of the Islamic Republic of Iran.

The Iranian representative had the audacity to accuse Israel, which has been fighting terrorism on a daily basis since it was founded, of committing atrocities, including genocide. Iran is the world's main terrorism-sponsoring State. Its forces and proxies know no limits and spare no effort in training, financing and executing terrorist acts all over the world, mainly in the Middle East. Iran, acting directly and through its proxy Hizbullah, commits atrocities against the people of Syria while supporting the Al-Assad regime, which massacres its own people, women and children alike, including through the use of chemical weapons. Iran spreads extremism, threatens its neighbours and destabilizes the region.

With regard to the issue of a zone free of weapons of mass destruction, Israel has demonstrated its constructive approach during the six rounds of consultations of the Glion process and is still committed to doing so under the parameters it has presented.

Mr. Al Musharakh (United Arab Emirates): I take the floor on behalf of my delegation to address the ludicrous claims by the Iranian representative, who has seemingly overlooked his country's expansionist regional policies, flagrant violations of the principle of sovereignty and constant interference in the internal affairs of Arab States, including Syria and Yemen. We invite that country to be a responsible neighbour rather than one causing tension and instability in our region by exporting its revolution.

With regard to the military campaign of the coalition to restore legitimacy in Yemen referenced by the Iranian representative, we would like to recall that the legitimate Government of Yemen issued a request for assistance in March 2015, including military intervention to protect Yemen and its people from the continued armed aggression of the Iran-backed

Houthis. In response to that request, the coalition to restore legitimacy in Yemen was formed under the leadership of our brother country the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia, in order to protect Yemen and its people and help it combat terrorism. That request was in full conformity with international law and the right to self-defence, as stipulated in Article 51 of the Charter of the United Nations.

Along with the Security Council, the League of Arab States, the Organization of Islamic Cooperation and the Cooperation Council of the Arab States of the Gulf, we condemn, in the strongest terms, the latest Houthi attack, on 1 October in the Strait of Bab-el-Mandeb, on a vessel chartered by my own country, the United Arab Emirates, an attack that was a clear violation of international law.

We also strongly condemn the active influence of the Islamic Republic of Iran in the conflict. It continues to support the Houthis in Yemen financially, strategically and militarily, by training Houthi fighters and sending shipments of weapons and ammunition into the country illegally and in flagrant violation of resolutions 2216 (2015) and 2231 (2015). Shipments of illicit weapons sent by Iran have been intercepted on multiple occasions.

With regard to Iran's reference to human rights and respect for international law, the First Committee is not the forum in which to talk about that subject, but I invite everyone to attend the Third Committee, where that specific topic will be discussed with reference to Iran.

Mr. Nath (India): I take the floor to respond to comments made by the Permanent Representative of Pakistan about India and about the Indian State of Jammu and Kashmir.

It is ironic that a country whose non-proliferation track record is marked by obstructionism seeks to convince the international community about its self-serving proposals. It is a matter of record that Pakistan is singularly responsible for blocking the international disarmament agenda and the work of the Conference on Disarmament.

Mr. Denktaş (Turkey): We exercise our right of reply to refute the allegations put forward by the representative of the Syrian regime. The following is a breakdown of the situation.

The Organization for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons has stated that it cannot verify the validity of the regime's declarations on its chemical-weapon programmes and stockpiles. For more details, I refer the Committee to the relevant reports of the Organization for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons. However, the reports do mention gaps, discrepancies and inconsistencies, in the most diplomatic and scientific way possible. In plain language, what is meant is that the Syrian regime is not being truthful about its chemical-weapon programmes and stockpiles and that it has hidden its chemical weapons. Why would a country do that? If a country becomes party to an international instrument, it takes action, with the help of the relevant bodies, to end its programme and get rid of all prohibited substances. A country would want to do that only if it intends to use them later. And that is in fact what the Syrian regime has done — consistently, repeatedly and systematically. I refer the Committee to the reports of the Joint Investigative Mechanism.

We have been hearing explanations from the Syrian regime, even this afternoon, stating that materials arrived in the country via another country, that such materials were used by other groups, that videos were fabricated and that the children suffocating with all of the symptoms consistent with a chemical-weapon attack were paid actors, that the testimony of their parents and doctors cannot be trusted since they are in the opposition, and that a chlorine barrel would not fit in a chimney. Such explanations are aimed at distracting the international community from the stark reality in Syria and from the horrors of the Syrian war tactics. But it is not a matter of politics or the terms used in the report. It is a matter of humanity.

Starting with the attack in Ghouta in 2013, two entities have been documented as having used toxic chemicals as weapons, that is, the Syrian regime and Da'esh. Both are comparable to each other in the extent of their horrific nature and brutality. Da'esh is the regime's only peer. That is what we understand from the reports of each international body tasked with investigating those crimes, and that is how we should all read them. It is all documented, and the next required steps are therefore measures leading to prosecution so as to ensure that no one ever dares to commit such horrific — I repeat, horrific — acts again. That is our moral responsibility. We will speak more about this topic during the relevant thematic debates.

Mr. Wood (United States of America): I exercise my right of reply to respond to a couple of issues.

The first issue relates to comments from the Chinese representative earlier today with regard to the United States deployment of the Terminal High Altitude Area Defense (THAAD) system in the Republic of Korea. The United States and the Republic of Korea remain committed to deploying the THAAD system to the Republic of Korea by the end of 2017. Our alliance decision to deploy THAAD to the Republic of Korea is a purely defensive measure against the Democratic People's Republic of Korea's weapons of mass destruction and ballistic-missile threats.

In addition to the recent nuclear-missile tests, we have now seen the Democratic People's Republic of Korea conduct more than 20 ballistic-missile launches over a six-month period. The Democratic People's Republic of Korea's nuclear- and ballistic-missile programmes have been proscribed by the United Nations and pose a grave threat to the United States and its allies. Actions like the missile launches and nuclear tests demonstrate the wisdom and necessity of the United States-Republic of Korea alliance's decision to deploy THAAD. Further actions by the Democratic People's Republic of Korea will force us to take steps to ensure our own security and that of our allies. The THAAD system will protect the security of the Republic of Korea and its people from armed attack, and protect alliance military forces from the Democratic People's Republic of Korea's weapons of mass destruction and ballistic-missile threats. The THAAD system deployed to Korea will not undermine China's or Russia's strategic deterrent. In fact, the United States agrees with China that the denuclearization of the Korean peninsula is of the utmost importance, and we call on all parties to take steps towards that goal.

The second issue relates to the charges levelled by the representative of the Syrian Government. First, the charges that the United States has provided toxic chemicals to terrorist groups is simply preposterous. Let me remind everyone that the United Nations-Organization for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons Joint Investigative Mechanism issued a report (see S/2016/738) in August that identified the Syrian Arab Armed Forces as having used chlorine as a weapon in 2014 and in 2015. The Joint Investigative Mechanism also found that the Islamic State in Iraq and the Levant had used mustard gas in Marea, Syria, in August 2015.

The use of chemical weapons by a State party to the Chemical Weapons Convention represents the most serious challenge to the Convention since its entry into force. We are working to uphold the norm against chemical weapons being used by anyone, including State and non-State actors, and to demonstrate that there will be serious consequences for such use. That is the best way to ensure that no actor will believe that breaking the century-old norm against chemical-weapon use will go unpunished. The United States will continue to seek accountability through appropriate diplomatic mechanisms, including the Security Council and the Organization for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons.

Mr. Ammar (Pakistan): I would like to state the following facts in response to the statement made by the representative of India. Before I do that, I have a simple question to ask the Indian representative: Why has India not responded to our proposal to establish a strategic restraint regime, or to our Prime Minister's proposal for a bilateral nuclear-test-ban arrangement between India and Pakistan?

More undeniable facts exist. India conducted its first nuclear-weapons test in 1974 by diverting nuclear technology and material from a reactor that was supplied to it for peaceful use, in violation of its solemn safeguards commitment. India continued to develop nuclear weapons despite numerous offers and proposals by Pakistan to keep South Asia free of nuclear weapons. For about two decades, Pakistan submitted a draft resolution in the General Assembly for the establishment of a nuclear-weapon-free zone in South Asia, which India thoughtlessly voted against year after year. We were left with no option but to have nuclear capability as an existential choice in order to restore strategic balance in the region.

India joined the Chemical Weapons Convention in 1996 as a chemical-weapon possessor State, despite its bilateral memorandum of understanding with Pakistan in 1992, just four years prior, affirming that it did not intend to develop or possess chemical weapons. India conducted its second nuclear-weapon test in May 1998, after the conclusion of the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty. Despite numerous proposals by Pakistan to establish a strategic restraint regime in South Asia, India has continually enhanced its strategic and conventional offensive military capabilities, including the production of weapon-grade fissile material, the development and testing of several ballistic and cruise missiles, and the introduction of nuclear submarines.

India is also trying to find space below Pakistan's perceived nuclear threshold to fight a conventional war. Such developments in India have compelled Pakistan to take appropriate counter-measures to deter all forms of aggression.

Mr. Bin Hamood (Saudi Arabia) (*spoke in Arabic*): I thank you, Sir, for giving me the floor to exercise my right of reply to respond to the allegations made by the representative of Iran.

I would like to state that the coalition forces have intervened in Yemen based on international legitimacy, and Saudi Arabia is concerned about the human losses there. With regard to the incident that took place two days ago, the coalition forces stated that they have already opened an investigation into it and will disclose the results and findings of the investigation once it has been concluded.

I would also like to reply to the comments made by the Syrian representative. He stated that the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia supports terrorist organizations and equips them with chemical materials. Such repeated accusations are groundless.

Mr. Ri Tong II (Democratic People's Republic of Korea): I would like to exercise my right of reply with regard to the remarks made by the representative of the United States.

The representative of the United States made an allegation that is totally untrue. The Democratic People's Republic of Korea totally rejects such comments. It does not reflect the situation on the Korean peninsula and is simply a distortion of the truth. In that regard, the Democratic People's Republic of Korea's delegation would like to remind the representative of the United States of two facts.

First, the Democratic People's Republic of Korea has become a nuclear Power. Who was responsible for giving it that status? It was the United States. It was the United States that pushed the Democratic People's Republic of Korea to become a nuclear Power by encouraging the development of the standard of its nuclear forces in the face of increasing nuclear blackmail by the United States and its hostile policy, which has been consistent for over 60 years. Not for one day has the United States abandoned its policy of hatred of the sovereignty and dignity of the Democratic People's Republic of Korea.

The United States cannot deny the fact that it brought the first nuclear weapon to South Korea in 1957 as a follow-up to their blackmail threats to use nuclear weapons against the Korean people during the Korean War. The United States cannot deny the fact that it increased the number of nuclear weapons brought into South Korea to more than 1,000 in the 1970s. The United States cannot deny the fact that it branded a worthy State Member of the United Nations, the Democratic People's Republic of Korea, as part of the "axis of evil" and designated the Democratic People's Republic as a target for a nuclear-based strike.

Secondly, the United States is now very present in the Eastern and Western Seas of the Korean peninsula through ongoing joint military exercises, openly aiming at the headquarters of the Democratic People's Republic of Korea's supreme leadership, our nuclear facilities and strategic rocket bases. The United States is mobilizing all of its maritime resources, led by the nuclear aircraft carrier U.S.S. *Ronald Reagan* and its most sophisticated strike capabilities and various nuclear weapons. The United States has been carrying out such exercises for over 60 years.

Those are all facts, and the United States cannot deny them. In the face of the growing threat caused by the largest nuclear-weapon State, which once used a nuclear weapon against humankind and an innocent urban civilian population, we have no option but to go nuclear. We will continue to enhance the quantity and quality of our nuclear armed forces and our nuclear-attack capability in the face of threats to our very survival. The Terminal High Altitude Area Defense system is a very dangerous part of missile defence and increases the possibility of a pre-emptive nuclear strike against the Democratic People's Republic of Korea and neighbouring countries. Therefore, as soon as it was announced, the Democratic People's Republic of Korea was totally opposed to it.

Mr. Hallak (Syrian Arab Republic) (*spoke in Arabic*): The representative of Turkey raised a few questions about the Joint Investigative Mechanism's report (see S/2016/738). I would like to ask him whether he has read the Security Council reports that mention the trafficking in sarin using civilian aircraft, or the fact that terrorists supported by the Turkish regime have carried out chemical-weapon tests on animals in Gaziantep, Turkey, also referred to as the Turkish Tora Bora. We call on the representative of Turkey to repudiate those facts by showing us evidence from

the investigations that were conducted and that were in fact suspended by the Turkish regime, with the arrest of the judges and prosecutors. Moreover, police officers were also arrested because they had discovered evidence of weapons trafficking. The reports of the Security Council's committees contain abundant facts that highlight the lies told by Turkey about the use of chemical weapons in Syria.

Once again, we were surprised by the hypocrisy of the representative of Israel because, as the saying goes, people who live in glass houses should not throw stones. We all know that Israel is responsible for having contributed to all kinds of terrorism, including chemical and biological terrorism, just to name a few. Israel provides all kinds of aid in weapons and ammunition to terrorist groups, in particular Da'esh and the Al-Nusra Front and their affiliated groups. Other colleagues have stated that their Governments and regimes do not provide aid to terrorist groups, or that they do not provide chemical weapons to such groups. But it does happen, and we know that it happens. Everyone else knows it as well. The day will come when the truth will be revealed.

Mr. Wu Jianjian (China) (*spoke in Chinese*): China takes the floor to exercise its right of reply to respond to the statement made by the representative of the United States.

It goes without saying that the issue of the Terminal High Altitude Area Defense (THAAD) system is a major one in the context of international security. The international community should be more concerned about that issue and find ways to address it appropriately. China has repeatedly stated its position on the THAAD. We maintain that various countries have legitimate concerns about the anti-missile issue, given the need to maintain the global strategic balance.

Mr. Nath (India): I am compelled to take the floor again to respond to the intervention made by the representative of Pakistan.

The biggest threat to peace and stability comes from the active promotion of terrorism and the unbridled expansion of fissile-material production and delivery systems for nuclear weapons, under the shadow of a deeply disturbing and deeply entrenched nexus between State entities and non-State actors. The international community must stand united against those whose persistent violations increase nuclear threats and

proliferation risks. The nuclear proliferation linkages that are active today have clear Pakistani fingerprints.

Mr. Wood (United States of America): I take the floor to respond to the comments made by the representative of the Democratic People's Republic of Korea. I will make some very brief points.

First and foremost, the United States does not pose a threat to the Democratic People's Republic of Korea. The cause of instability on the Korean peninsula is the Democratic People's Republic of Korea itself and its nuclear and missile activities.

The United States does not, and will not, recognize the Democratic People's Republic of Korea as a nuclear-weapon State.

Mr. Al-Thani (Qatar) (*spoke in Arabic*): I have asked to take the floor to respond to the representative of Syria, who has always tried to distract the international community from the genocide being perpetrated by the Syrian Government.

We follow the criminal policies and activities of the Syrian Government, and we see that people there who take a stand are judged to be criminals. Allies that have supported the protesters have also been similarly accused. Qatar rejects such allegations. We see the way in which Syria flouts international law. It continues its policy of terror, displacement and bloodshed. It uses weapons that are all banned at the international level in order to accomplish its ends.

It is clear that the rising level of terrorism in Syria is derived from the criminal policy of the Syrian Government and its criminal practices against its own people, since it works with criminal organizations to be able to maintain their existence. Cities are besieged, air strikes are carried out against cities, schools are destroyed, religious shrines and hospitals are destroyed, and medical and humanitarian personnel are targeted. Humanitarian aid is not allowed to be delivered to the people who need it most. All humanitarian, moral and legislative norms have been flouted.

In conclusion, given the threat that terrorism poses to the international community and to international peace and security, my country once again condemns terrorism in all its forms and manifestations, regardless of its perpetrators. We reiterate that countries must combat terrorism with all of the means at their disposal under the Charter of the United Nations and uphold their international legal commitments. We reiterate

our commitment to doing our utmost to combat that reprehensible phenomenon. We should support international and regional efforts to maintain peace in the world and in our region.

Mr. Al-Otoom (Jordan) (*spoke in Arabic*): In responding to the comments made by the representative of Syria about the transfer of chemical weapons across the Jordanian border with Syria, I reaffirm that Jordan respects all international instruments that prohibit the acquisition and transfer of the toxic materials to which the Syrian representative referred. Moreover, I reiterate that my country remains committed to providing humanitarian aid solely under the auspices of international organizations, because we are convinced that we have a moral, humanitarian duty to do so during the Syrian conflict. The entire world can see the role that Jordan plays in addressing the phenomenon of terrorism.

Mr. Fares (Libya) (*spoke in Arabic*): A few days ago, my delegation stated that the chemical weapons in Libya had been under strict control ever since they were disclosed. They were removed from Libya and disposed of outside Libya. In that regard, the information that we heard today is unfounded.

Mr. Denктаş (Turkey): I apologize for taking the floor again at this hour, but I would like to make two points.

First, the allegations made by the representative of Syria are baseless, and I would like to go on record as refuting every single word of them.

Secondly, I would like to underscore a few facts. There is no problem between Turkey and the Syrian regime. I do not want to speak on behalf of others, but I do not think that any problem exists between the Syrian regime and the regime of any other country against which it has made accusations today, as it has in the past, in an attempt to distract the international community from the steps that it is about to take and should take in order to hold the Syrian regime accountable.

Mr. Ammar (Pakistan): I must respond to the comments made by my Indian colleague.

It is unfortunate that, when shown the reality of the Indian hegemonistic policies in the region, which directly affect its neighbours, India chooses to divert the attention of the international community from its own irresponsible actions and make frivolous comments.

On terrorism, may we point out that Pakistan has handed over comprehensive dossiers to the Secretary-General on the support and financing of terrorism by India in Pakistan and on State-sponsored terrorism by India in Jammu and Kashmir.

We do not have to repeat what the world already knows about India and its diversion of fissile material obtained for peaceful purposes and the building of its first nuclear bomb, which it had the audacity to call “Smiling Buddha”.

Finally, I would ask India for an urgent response to our Prime Minister’s proposal for a bilateral arrangement between Pakistan and India on a nuclear-test ban.

Mr. Dehghani (Islamic Republic of Iran): I would like to exercise my delegation’s right of reply with regard to the comments made by the representatives of Israel and the United Arab Emirates.

It is not the Islamic Republic of Iran that has concluded that Israel has committed acts of occupation, aggression, war crimes and genocide against the Palestinian people. That has been concluded by the international community and reflected in many human rights resolutions and other United Nations resolutions. Israel is the occupier and aggressor force in the region, and that cannot be denied.

With regard to the comments made by the representative of the United Arab Emirates, I would also like to make a few points. It is ridiculous that the United Arab Emirates claims that Iran sends arms to Yemen. Access to Yemen by sea, air and land routes is completely blocked, and no one except the United Arab Emirates and those who are committing acts of aggression against Yemen can send arms, aircraft and gunboats to Yemen to bomb the Yemeni people. It is not strange that both the United Arab Emirates and Israel describe the resistance forces of Lebanon, Hizbullah, as a terrorist group. Hizbullah is fighting Israeli aggressor forces and terrorist groups, such as Da’esh, Jabhat Al-Nusra and Al-Qaida. It is not strange to see that the United Arab Emirates called that group a terrorist group, because it supports Da’esh and Jabhat Al-Nusra. I would like to ask the representative of the United Arab Emirates to explain to the Committee why it is supporting the spread of terrorism and violent extremism in the Middle East by providing arms and money to terrorist groups such as Da’esh, Jabhat Al-Nusra and Al-Qaida in Yemen. I would also like to

urge the representative of the United Arab Emirates to explain to the Committee why it is targeting civilians in Yemen, in brazen violation of its obligations under international humanitarian law.

Mr. Ri Tong II (Democratic People’s Republic of Korea): Once again, the representative of the United States referred to the Democratic People’s Republic of Korea as a threat. I do not need to repeat what I said before. However, I would like to make three recommendations.

First, I recommend that the representative of the United States pay a visit to the United States military bases — I cannot count how many there are — in South Korea. They have been there for more than six decades. The United States once caused a war in Korea, inflicting unspeakable suffering on the Korean people, including with the threat of nuclear weapons, causing 10 million families to be separated in the north and the south of the peninsula and great pain as a result. I recommend that the representative of the United States visit the sites used for military exercises that I mentioned. The military exercises began on 1 October.

Secondly, I recommend that the United States conduct an in-depth study of its own policy towards the Democratic People’s Republic of Korea. The policy of the United States amounts to very hostile nuclear blackmail.

Thirdly, many military exercises, major and minor, are under way around the world. No other military exercise targets a particular country, seeks to decapitate its leadership or target the headquarters of its leadership. The whole aim of the United States is to eliminate the Democratic People’s Republic of Korea as a regime. It is because of that that the Democratic People’s Republic of Korea had no option but to go nuclear.

Mr. Hallak (Syrian Arab Republic) (*spoke in Arabic*): With regard to the comments made by the representative of Qatar, I would like to make the following points.

The Syrian people will not forget the bloodshed that has been caused by Qatari officials in our country. Qatar supports and finances terrorist organizations. If the representatives of Qatar think that our memory is short-lived and that we will forget those crimes, they are wrong. Syria is bigger than Qatar, and the representative of Qatar, along with his superiors, knows that very well. We would like to convey to him and

his superiors that Qatari gas will never flow through Syrian territory.

With regard to the comments made by the representative of Turkey, I would like to ask him, in front of everyone here, why his country has thus far refused to provide the international community and the

Organization for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons with information about the sarin that it confiscated in Turkey, what happened to the material and why Turkish officials released the 12 terrorists who had been caught red-handed with the material and arrested.

The meeting rose at 6.35 p.m.