



# General Assembly

Sixty-eighth session

## First Committee

7<sup>th</sup> meeting

Friday, 11 October 2013, 10 a.m.  
New York

Official Records

*Chair:* Mr. Dabbashi ..... (Libya)

*The meeting was called to order at 10.05 a.m.*

### Agenda items 89 to 107 (continued)

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

**Mr. Dhital (Nepal):** At the outset, I would like to congratulate you, Sir, on your election to the Chair of the First Committee of the General Assembly at its sixty-eighth session. I congratulate the other members of the Bureau as well. I assure you of my delegation's full support and cooperation in the discharge of your responsibilities.

My delegation associates itself with the statement made by the representative of Indonesia on behalf of the Non-Aligned Movement (see A/C.1/68/PV.3).

Nepal believes that disarmament is crucially important not only for the maintenance of global peace and security, but also for unlocking valuable resources for much-needed social and economic development, attaining internationally agreed development goals — including the Millennium Development Goals — and framing an inclusive post-2015 sustainable development agenda that can provide real freedom and prosperity to all the peoples of the world. Disarmament is a moral issue for the cause of humankind.

Nepal has always stood for general and complete disarmament of all weapons of mass destruction, including nuclear, radiological, biological and chemical weapons, in a time-bound and credible manner. The inhumane and morally hazardous nature of weapons of mass destruction should guide the world

community to come up with a strong commitment to the non-proliferation of such dangerous weapons and their subsequent elimination within a specified period of time.

It is obvious that any detonation of a nuclear weapon comes with catastrophic and long-term consequences for the lives of human beings and the environment. Therefore, the continued existence of stockpiles of nuclear warheads and their delivery systems and attempts at continued proliferation should be questioned. As a party to Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons, Nepal strongly believes in the complete elimination of nuclear weapons in order to attain a credible regime of nuclear disarmament and non-proliferation for sustained peace. We also stand for the early conclusion of a fissile material cut-off treaty and the prevention of an arms race in outer space.

While upholding the use of nuclear energy for peaceful purposes, Nepal emphasizes the need for strong and infallible measures for nuclear safety and security and specific assurances for the non-use or non-threat of use of nuclear weapons against non-nuclear-weapon States.

We appreciate the continuing progress in the establishment of nuclear-weapon-free zones in various parts of the world and, to that end, welcome the efforts directed at establishing a zone free from nuclear weapons and all weapons of mass destruction in the Middle East. We also welcome any initiative for peace and disarmament from any quarter of the world at the national, bilateral, regional and global levels.

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The Chemical Weapons Convention (CWC), which provides for a non-discriminatory, comprehensive and verifiable prohibition of all categories of chemical weapons, has proved an important instrument towards eliminating weapons of mass destruction. It is heartening that the CWC has set a precedent of reaching nearly universalized adherence in its scope and operation. Nepal urges the elimination of all stockpiles of chemical weapons as soon as possible in all parts of the world.

Nepal believes that the promotion of multilateralism, wider confidence-building measures and the pursuit of collective security constitute essential prerequisites for achieving the ultimate goals of peace and disarmament. The Conference on Disarmament, which is the sole multilateral disarmament negotiating forum, is in need of revitalization in order to advance the multilateral disarmament negotiations for more concrete actions and results in its mandated areas.

International regulatory control of the trade in conventional arms through a legally binding instrument is a recognized need in our time. The Arms Trade Treaty, adopted by the General Assembly in April 2013, is a landmark achievement in that direction. While it is necessary to control the illicit diversion of arms into the hands of non-State actors, every State has the legitimate right to acquire conventional arms for self-defence purposes.

The proliferation of, and illicit trade in, small arms and light weapons has taken the lives of millions and has become a force for sustaining conflicts and exacerbating armed violence in troubled areas of the world. It has also helped sustain organized crime, money laundering and terrorism. There should be more political will and commitment at all levels to preventing, combating and eradicating the illicit trade in small arms and light weapons in all its aspects.

Nepal hosts the United Nations Regional Centre for Peace and Disarmament in Asia and the Pacific, with the conviction that such regional mechanisms play an important and complementary role in promoting the global agenda for peace and disarmament. We believe that the Kathmandu process needs to be revitalized, so as to spread the relevant education and awareness and facilitate dialogue and deliberations aimed at fostering understanding, cooperation and confidence-building and strengthening the promotion of peace and disarmament in the region.

As it has done in previous years, at the Committee's session this year, Nepal is sponsoring a draft resolution on the United Nations Regional Centre for Peace and Disarmament in Asia and the Pacific. We appreciate the continued support of all delegations for the adoption of the draft resolution.

In conclusion, we believe that the multilateralism is the best approach to the advancement of disarmament and non-proliferation and will eventually help in the promotion of peace and security on a sustained basis. The First Committee is an inclusive multilateral forum poised to play an immensely important role in steering the course of deliberations, so as to broaden understanding, create consensus and build confidence among Member States for the greater cause of peace, security and disarmament, which are of paramount importance to the world.

**Mr. Sellenthal** (Estonia): Let me first congratulate you, Mr. Chair, on assuming your position and to assure you of our full support in your efforts to achieve a successful outcome during this very important session. I would also like to extend our congratulations to the Organization for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons (OPCW), and to Ambassador Üzümcü, for winning the Nobel Peace Prize.

We align ourselves fully with the statement made by the observer of the European Union (EU) (see A/C.1/68/PV.3) and would like to highlight some specific issues to which Estonia attaches particular importance at this year's session of the First Committee.

Estonia shares the view of the overwhelming majority of Member States that the Arms Trade Treaty (ATT) is an extremely important instrument in curbing illicit and illegal transfers of conventional arms to conflict zones or parties to armed conflict. We are also very pleased to see that far more than half of the Member States have already signed the Treaty. Our focus now should be on a rapid ratification process and an early entry into force of the ATT. That is exactly why my country, Estonia, has set the target of depositing our letter of approval of the ATT, together with the declaration of the provisional application of articles 6 and 7, with the Secretary-General, even before the end of this calendar year. We would also like to encourage other States to demonstrate their dedication and commitment to the process, and ask for their help in bringing the ATT into force as soon as possible. We are also committed to the implementation of the ATT at both the national and the international

levels. As a member State of the European Union, we intend to lend our expertise and participate in the EU ATT implementation assistance programme for third countries.

The adaption of the ATT reminds us of the most recent time that the international community was able to make progress in concluding a universal treaty on disarmament and non-proliferation. Unfortunately, today, 16 years later, the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty (CTBT) has still not entered into force. We urge States, particularly those whose adherence is required for the CTBT to enter into force, to sign and ratify the Treaty without further delay.

The Conference on Disarmament's ongoing stalemate remains deeply troubling, a judgment that has been constantly repeated over the years and can be considered the unofficial slogan of that body. This year is no exception. We nevertheless would like to express our gratitude for the provision allowing observer States to take part in the work of the informal working group on the programme of work. The Conference on Disarmament's agenda encompasses global concerns, and we believe that those concerns should be negotiated on a non-discriminatory, transparent and multilateral basis, with the broader participation of interested States. Given the universal nature of the United Nations, we do not see any reason or moral justification for excluding an interested State from participating fully and equally in the disarmament discussions and negotiations and contributing to its aims. Let me, at this point, reiterate Estonia's request to participate fully and equally in disarmament discussions as a full member of the Conference on Disarmament. We also reiterate our call for the early nomination of a special rapporteur to review the issue of membership.

The use of chemical weapons in Syria on 21 August, and allegedly on several occasions before that, demonstrates that there are still those who do not hesitate to use weapons of mass destruction. We welcome Security Council resolution 2118 (2013) and the OPCW Executive Council's decision of 27 September, which both constitute and reinforce legally binding obligations to destroy all Syrian chemical weapons, their means of delivery and all relevant facilities in an ambitious but achievable time frame. We also hope that effective implementation of those decisions will pave the way for further universalization of the Chemical Weapons Convention.

In order to support the OPCW in implementing its decision on Syria, Estonia has decided to provide a voluntary financial contribution to the OPCW special trust fund established for that purpose.

Supporting mine-clearance activities remains essential for the stabilization processes in post-conflict States and the safe return of refugees. My country is determined to support humanitarian demining and mine action. We have increased our contributions over the past few years and will continue to do so. That includes financial support to the United Nations Mine Action Service, as well as to clearance activities focusing on the remnants of war and mines as part of various bilateral or international humanitarian projects. We also urge all States that have not done so to join the Anti-Personnel Mine Ban Convention.

Finally, the United Nations, including the First Committee, could serve as an important forum for the sharing of information on efforts taken at the national level to strengthen cybersecurity. It is also important to have international discussions on building trust and transparency in that field. Cybersecurity and Internet freedom are intrinsically linked and are in no way incompatible. The United Nations Group of Governmental Experts took an important decision recently by consensus, namely, that international law was applicable and essential to the promotion of an open, secure and accessible cyberspace.

**Mr. Cancela** (Uruguay) (*spoke in Spanish*): As this is the first time that Uruguay is taking the floor in the First Committee, allow me, Sir, on behalf of my delegation, to congratulate you and the other members of the Bureau on your election. I wish to assure you of the full support and cooperation of my delegation in the discharge of your mandate.

My delegation associates itself with the statement made earlier by the representative of Cuba on behalf of the Community of Latin American and Caribbean States (see A/C.1/68/PV.4).

Uruguay is deeply committed to the fight against illicit trafficking in small arms and light weapons, against the destabilizing effects caused by the accumulation of such arms and against their improper use. They are truly weapons of mass destruction in the Latin American and Caribbean region, and they threaten civilian populations, especially women and children.

As a sponsor of resolution 67/234 and a signatory to the Arms Trade Treaty (ATT), my delegation particularly welcomes the adoption of the Treaty. The broad support for that resolution motivates us to continue the work to achieve its early entry into force. In that regard, my delegation calls on all States and encourages them to sign the Treaty, so as to achieve its universal ratification, its entry into force and its full implementation.

Uruguay reiterates that the Arms Trade Treaty is a major step towards a more responsible trade in conventional arms, including small arms and light weapons, their parts, components and ammunition. The regulation of that trade will have fundamental consequences on armed conflicts, especially for civilian victims of armed violence, in particular women and children, and it will promote peace and security by impeding arms transfers to conflict zones.

Nevertheless, we must continue exerting our utmost efforts to prevent attacks on civilian populations and avoid greater numbers of civilian victims, as well to prevent the various acts of violence caused by armed conflicts, the displacement of persons, forced disappearance and the torture of civilians. The challenges remain the same, namely, to reduce the loss of human life resulting from armed conflicts through greater promotion and enforcement of international law and international humanitarian law. Now we have an instrument for that purpose.

In order to achieve the full implementation of the ATT at the national level, Uruguay has begun to adapt and update its legislation to the new parameters set out in the Treaty. We are also pleased to report that the Treaty has been submitted to our Parliament, and we expect it to be ratified soon.

We also believe that the United Nations Programme of Action to Prevent, Combat and Eradicate the Illicit Trade in Small Arms and Light Weapons in All Its Aspects is an instrument of vital importance and an international benchmark marking progress in the fight against illicit trafficking in those weapons.

We are pleased that the second Programme of Action Review Conference, held last year, made significant progress by agreeing on a consensus outcome document. However, Uruguay will continue working towards the adoption of a legally binding international instrument in order to ensure that the trade in conventional weapons is managed responsibly

and to prevent the diversion of such weapons to the black market. We also stress the importance of the adoption of Security Council resolution 2117 (2013), which addresses the impact of illicit transfers and the destabilizing effects of the accumulation and misuse of small arms and light weapons.

As a non-nuclear-weapon State, Uruguay is committed to strengthening the disarmament and non-proliferation regime. Uruguay's adherence to the multilateral regulatory framework is an important part of its foreign policy, which stresses and promotes the need for further progress in universal, multilateral, non-discriminatory and transparent negotiations in which all countries participate, regardless of their size and power, in order to achieve general and complete disarmament under strict international control.

We welcome the holding of the first High-level Meeting on Nuclear Disarmament (see A/68/PV.11) on 26 September at the General Assembly, where we reaffirmed our fundamental commitment to nuclear disarmament. We also welcome the progress made at the eighth Review Conference of the Parties to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons, which led to the adoption of a substantive outcome document and the identification of 64 measures aimed at advancing the implementation of the provisions of the Treaty.

Since the second session of the Preparatory Committee for the 2015 Review Conference, which took place in Geneva, we have called for the review process to make concrete progress in nuclear disarmament. We need to implement instruments that are complementary to the Treaty and to start negotiations as soon as possible so as to facilitate the attainment of the ultimate goal, which is a world free of nuclear weapons.

With regard to complementary instruments, Uruguay emphasizes once again the critical importance of the early entry into force of the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty (CTBT), as highlighted at the eighth Review Conference, which took place on 27 September. In that regard, we urge annex 2 States of the CTBT to ratify it promptly, and we call once again for all States to uphold the moratorium on conducting nuclear testing or other tests of explosive devices of that nature.

With regard to ongoing negotiations, Uruguay calls for the Conference on Disarmament to start negotiations without delay on a non-discriminatory and



internationally verifiable treaty banning the production of fissile material for nuclear-weapons manufacture. At the same time, Uruguay urges that we begin negotiations, without any conditions, on a legally binding instrument on negative security assurances in order to provide guarantees to non-nuclear-weapon States that they will not suffer the catastrophic consequences of the use, or threat of use, of such weapons by nuclear Powers.

Uruguay is aware of the existence of numerous disarmament initiatives from various countries, groups of countries and discussion forums. They are all valuable, since they share the concern for the ultimate goal, namely, nuclear disarmament and non-proliferation. We believe that it would be beneficial to coordinate the existing initiatives, assess them and leverage their synergies, so as to chart the way forward and get them to converge in a constructive fashion, within a limited time frame, and reach the goal that motivates us — the achievement of a nuclear-weapon-free world.

Uruguay also deplores the failure to hold a conference in 2012, as agreed, on the establishment of a zone in the Middle East free of nuclear-weapons and all other weapons of mass destruction, pursuant to Security Council resolution 984 (1995). We urge all parties to hold that conference in the near future.

The strengthening of the regime of general and complete disarmament under strict and effective international control calls for the effective implementation of conventions that advocate the prohibition and elimination of other weapons of mass destruction. In that regard, we reiterate that, for Uruguay, the total elimination of chemical and biological weapons is a priority in the area of disarmament and non-proliferation. For that reason, our country strongly advocates the early universalization of the Convention on the Prohibition of the Development, Production, Stockpiling and Use of Chemical Weapons and on their Destruction. We call on all States possessing such weapons to comply with their obligations under by the Convention and destroy their stockpiles.

Uruguay welcomes the Syrian Arab Republic's joining the Organization for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons (OPCW). It also welcomes the adoption of Security Council resolution 2118 (2013) and the decision of the Executive Council of the OPCW, which has set the procedures for the chemical-weapons destruction programme in the Syrian Arab Republic.

Uruguay recognizes the value of the Conference on Disarmament as the truly multilateral forum of the international community for disarmament negotiations, as well as the importance of the primary role that that Conference plays in substantive negotiations on priority disarmament issues. Nevertheless, the Conference has not been able to implement a programme of work that meets the aspirations and needs of the international community. It is therefore imperative to ensure that the multilateral negotiating body par excellence fulfils its mandate. In that regard, Uruguay believes that one of the possible means of revitalizing the work of the Conference is by expanding its membership to include States that have expressed a legitimate interest in being part of that body. Our country has formalized its aspiration to join the Conference on Disarmament, as have other States that have been advocating its expansion since 1982.

It is our responsibility to exhaust all means to further advance the goal of disarmament and halt proliferation, in accordance with the Charter of the United Nations, which is the supreme instrument in the maintenance of peace and international security.

**Mr. Errázuriz (Chile)** (*spoke in Spanish*): Allow me, Sir, to express our congratulations on your election as Chair of the First Committee, as well as our wishes for success in your work this year. We also extend our congratulations to the other members of the Bureau. We are committed to making a positive contribution to the outcome of our deliberations.

We also wish to congratulate the Organization for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons for the Nobel Peace Prize that it has just been awarded.

Chile associates itself with the statement made by the representative of Indonesia on behalf of Non-aligned Movement (see A/C.1/68/PV.3). We would like to make the following additional remarks in an abridged version of our original statement, the full version of which can be found on QuickFirst.

Nuclear disarmament is an urgent political necessity. Recent events in the Syrian Arab Republic have demonstrated the horrendous impact that weapons of mass destruction have on civilian populations, and, as we are well aware, nuclear weapons are infinitely more destructive than chemical weapons. Their indiscriminate effect is devastating, and their use is a serious violation of international humanitarian law.

Moreover, we have no doubt whatsoever that the use of nuclear weapons would be a crime against humanity.

This year, we have continued to observe the deadlock that has affected the main areas and forums of the disarmament agenda, along with the slow progress observed in the implementation of the road map adopted by the eighth Review Conference on the Parties to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons in its Action Plan.

Nevertheless, we must also recognize that there have been some movement and some new developments in the disarmament agenda, which are creating new paths and opportunities for progress and which we should highlight. In that regard, we agree with the vast majority of States, which is pushing for real progress in nuclear disarmament, as eloquently demonstrated at the recently held General Assembly High-level Meeting on Nuclear Disarmament (see A/68/PV.11). That majority includes not only States that do not have nuclear weapons and plan never to have them, but also civil society, an actor that must not be excluded from democratic multilateralism.

Given the evidence that the doctrines explaining and even justifying the possession and use — even hypothetical — of nuclear weapons still have proponents and followers among the great Powers, new approaches such as the consideration of the humanitarian and environmental consequences resulting from the detonation of a nuclear device, whether intended or not, provide valuable tools for advancing the dismantling of such doctrines.

Now that we have witnessed the horrendous humanitarian impact of weapons of mass destruction in the Syrian Arab Republic, nuclear disarmament requires a vigorous intellectual and democratic campaign to delegitimize the most devastating of the weapons of mass destruction, namely, nuclear weapons. In order to stigmatize those weapons, the Cold War doctrines underlying them, including nuclear deterrence, will also have to be delegitimized. It is essential, in that connection, to create powerful currents of opinion to tilt the political balance towards nuclear disarmament. In that regard, the support of civil society is needed to generate the necessary political conditions for that to succeed.

Chile supports and promotes the human security paradigm, which advocates people-centred multilateralism for peace, in which people and the

security of women, children and men are the driving force and inspiration of the approach. The sacred injunction to preserve human life and dignity must prevail over power politics and doctrines such as nuclear deterrence, which — purposely or accidentally — endanger life itself on our planet. We therefore support the process that was initiated in Oslo at the Conference on the Humanitarian Impact of Nuclear Weapons and is to be continued in Mexico, and which seeks reaffirm a humanitarian approach to nuclear disarmament.

While unilateral, bilateral and regional efforts promoting the goal of disarmament have shown some progress, we still see, in the area of multilateral negotiations, the signs of paralysis that are so familiar to all of us. Political will on the part of States is needed, but it must be backed by functional mechanisms that enable their material realization. We reaffirm our commitment to multilateralism in general, and to nuclear disarmament and non-proliferation in particular.

In that regard, we believe that the establishment of the open-ended working group to take forward disarmament negotiations, which held two promising meetings in Geneva this year, is a step in the right direction and usefully empowers the General Assembly in the multilateral negotiations on nuclear disarmament.

Despite the efforts made in 2013, which included the establishment of an informal working group that met during the year, the Conference on Disarmament remains caught in an intolerable situation of paralysis. The Conference should remain the main forum for multilateral disarmament, although its current inability to adopt a programme of work and to address urgent unresolved matters makes it necessary to consider reforms that could help end the deadlock and revive the disarmament machinery. Such a directed process of revitalization, which would enable the Conference to regain its function as a negotiating body, would require broad political commitment so that States could feel that they have an effective forum in which it would be possible for them to build a safer world while protecting their legitimate national interests.

We call on countries yet again to redouble their efforts to ensure that the Conference on Disarmament can adopt a comprehensive programme of work on topics such as negotiations on nuclear disarmament, including a convention on the prohibition of nuclear weapons, negative security assurances, the prevention of an arms race in outer space and the negotiation of a

fissile material cut-off treaty, including the question of surpluses. It is necessary to be flexible and mobilize the political will needed to tackle those issues, so as to end the ongoing deadlock.

As a country within the first densely populated area in the world to be declared a nuclear-weapon-free zone through the Treaty for the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons in Latin America and the Caribbean — the Treaty of Tlatelolco — we reaffirm the importance of the establishment of internationally recognized nuclear-weapon-free zones, which strengthen international and regional peace and security, as well as the need to equip them with the necessary institutional structure enabling them to focus the efforts of States parties to fulfil their commitments and demonstrate that our zone can make an important contribution to the goal of nuclear disarmament. In that connection, we urge the nuclear Powers to withdraw all of their reservations to the Protocols to the Tlatelolco Treaty, thus helping to eliminate the risk of the use of nuclear weapons against the countries of the region.

It is regrettable that the commitments of the States parties to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons made in 1995, 2005 and 2010 have not yet been implemented in terms of holding a global conference on a zone free of nuclear weapons and other weapons of mass destruction in the Middle East. All countries of the region must actively participate in that process by renouncing nuclear weapons and acceding to the Treaty as non-nuclear-weapon States.

As a crucial step towards disarmament, we emphasize the importance of the early entry into force of the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty, which is a crucial step towards disarmament. While welcoming the recent ratifications of the Treaty, Chile calls upon all fraternal countries that have not yet done so to sign and ratify the Treaty. We all, in particular the annex 2 States, have a special political responsibility to the world. Genuine evidence of our leadership would be to place the collective interest above domestic considerations in dealing with international peace and security.

Chile believes that the international safeguards regime should be promoted and strengthened by the universalization of the additional protocol to the International Atomic Energy Agency safeguards agreement. Furthermore, there is a need to identify in an objective manner and firmly condemn the current

risks of proliferation and to devise effective preventive mechanisms.

The danger of nuclear weapons being used by non-State actors or terrorist groups remains a possibility that weighs on the international community. That is why Chile supports efforts to promote nuclear security through international cooperation while actively participating in the Nuclear Security Summits held to date.

Chile reiterates its firm support for multilateral efforts to achieve nuclear disarmament and non-proliferation, as well as the elimination of all weapons of mass destruction. We also condemn the military use by any country of biological and chemical weapons, and we call on all States to accede to the Biological and Chemical Weapons Conventions.

Following the deplorable events in the Syrian Arab Republic, the Government of Chile appreciates the huge significance of the unanimously adopted Security Council resolution 2118 (2013). Much like the decision taken by the Executive Council of the Organization for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons on the elimination of all chemical weapons in Syria, that resolution reaffirms the invaluable role of multilateralism and international legal instruments in the peaceful settlement of disputes.

In recent years, progress has been made in promoting and strengthening instruments dealing with conventional weapons. The Convention on Cluster Munitions, for instance, entered into force in August 2010. Aware of the important role played by that Convention in further developing international humanitarian law, Chile will host another regional seminar on cluster munitions in December, with the support of the United Nations Development Programme. We hope that Central and South American and Caribbean countries will attend.

The Arms Trade Treaty, adopted earlier this year, was a response to a deep-rooted desire on the part of the international community to promote transparency in the trade in conventional weapons and to reduce and eliminate the negative effects in terms of human suffering caused in many parts of the world by the diversion of small arms and light weapons into illegal trade. In that connection, we also reaffirm our support for, and accession to, the Convention on the Prohibition of the Use, Stockpiling, Production and Transfer of Anti-Personnel Mines and on Their Destruction.

In conclusion, Chile wishes to stress that generating the mutual trust needed for significant progress in disarmament requires the political will of all States and the firm commitment of the international community. In that connection, we commit to making a constructive contribution to the work of the First Committee.

**Mr. Luque Márquez (Ecuador)** (*spoke in Spanish*): First of all, may I express to you, Sir, and to the other members of the Bureau my delegation's congratulations on your election. I also wish to express our delegation's appreciation to the High Representative for Disarmament Affairs, Ms. Angela Kane, and her team for their consistent presence at our meetings.

The delegation of Ecuador also wishes to express its support for the statement made by the representative of Indonesia on behalf of the Non-Aligned Movement (see A/C.1/68/PV.3).

Ecuador was the first country in the world to recognize in its Constitution the rights of nature so as to ensure that its existence and preservation and the regeneration of its vital cycles, structure, functions and evolutionary processes be respected completely. The Ecuadorian Constitution also declares our national territory to be an area of peace, and it guarantees a healthy environment for its inhabitants. In that context, Ecuador deplores and condemns the very existence of weapons of mass destruction on the face of the Earth and believes that their use or the threat of their use is a crime against nature and against humanity.

In that regard, like many other States and as discussed at the recent General Assembly High-level Meeting on Nuclear Disarmament (see A/68/PV.11), Ecuador believes that nuclear disarmament and non-proliferation must be parallel, interrelated and converging processes. My country, a State that has no nuclear weapons, has complied with and will comply with its international obligations in the field of nuclear non-proliferation. In so doing, it has been — and is still — waiting for the nuclear-weapon States to fulfil their commitments regarding nuclear disarmament. In that connection, Ecuador regrets that it has not seen any compliance with that obligation to date. Ecuador believes that it is high time that the international community put into practice the priority it has placed on nuclear disarmament by starting negotiations on a legally binding global treaty prohibiting the development, possession, use and threat of use of nuclear weapons.

Ecuador shares the concerns of other States regarding the current deadlock in the Conference on Disarmament, which is, in line with the decision of the first special session of the General Assembly devoted to disarmament, the sole multilateral negotiating forum in the field. My country believes the current deadlock in the Conference is due mainly to a lack of political will. We hope the informal working group established within the Conference, which Ecuador co-chairs, will reach an agreed, robust and progressive programme of work that will allow the Conference to continue to contribute important legal instruments, such as the Convention on Chemical Weapons, to the international community.

Furthermore, the United Nations Disarmament Commission has shown poor results for several years. It is therefore logical, coherent and necessary to undertake a comprehensive analysis of the United Nations disarmament machinery. To that end, my delegation reiterates its support for the convening of a fourth special session of the General Assembly devoted to disarmament, so that all the entities that make up the disarmament machinery can be examined and the corresponding corrective measures be adopted. For the special session to be able meet at long last, we must avoid taking decisions that compromise the integrity of the disarmament machinery.

Ecuador reiterates its call for the universalization of the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT) and the fulfilment of the obligations arising from the conclusions and recommendations of the May 2010 NPT Review Conference. In that respect, Ecuador hopes that the most recent sessions of the Preparatory Committee for the 2015 Review Conference of the Parties to the NPT, held in Vienna and Geneva, and the next session of the Committee, to be held in New York in 2014, will pave the way for a successful conclusion of the 2015 Review Conference.

As one of the original parties to the Treaty for the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons in Latin America and the Caribbean — the Treaty of Tlatelolco — Ecuador encourages the signatories of the Additional Protocols to the Treaty to withdraw the interpretative declarations made at the time of their signing, as they affect the process of denuclearization established by the Treaty. In that same context, we would also urge all States to undertake efforts to establish and consolidate other nuclear-weapon-free zones all around the world.



We therefore deplore the fact that the conference on the establishment of a zone free of nuclear weapons and other weapons of mass destruction in the Middle East, which should have met in 2012, has still not convened. We call on the organizers to convene it as soon as possible. We also reiterate our call for the only State in the region that has not yet renounced the possession of nuclear weapons and acceded to the NPT — Israel — to do so and place itself under the safeguards of the International Atomic Energy Agency.

In the context of efforts to achieve disarmament and non-proliferation, Ecuador expresses its support for the early entry into force of the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty and wishes to state that the development and improvement of the capabilities of such weapons through subcritical explosions and other procedures are contrary to the objectives and purposes of the Treaty.

On the other hand, Ecuador advocates for the legitimate and inalienable right of States that wish to develop, produce and use nuclear energy for peaceful purposes to do so without discrimination. My delegation therefore reaffirms its support for the regulatory framework provided for that purpose by the International Agency for Atomic Energy, while insisting on the obligation of States that opt for that type of energy to develop and implement the highest standards in the field of nuclear safety and security.

In relation to other weapons of mass destruction and on the basis of the principles I have outlined, the delegation of Ecuador would like to reiterate its full commitment to the Chemical Weapons Convention and the Biological Weapons Convention and condemns the use of such weapons, wherever and by whomever, and calls for their total elimination, in fulfilment of the commitments undertaken in the Conventions, namely, to eliminate such weapons within the specified time frame and without delay or postponement.

In the area of conventional weapons, Ecuador shares and strongly supports the objectives of the Programme of Action to Prevent, Combat and Eradicate the Illicit Trade in Small Arms and Light Weapons in All Its Aspects. In that context, we warmly welcome the agreements reached by consensus at the 2012 Small Arms Review Conference and express our commitment to the decisions arising from those agreements.

At the same time, we regret that the United Nations Conference on the Arms Trade Treaty, held in March

2013, could not reach an agreement on such a treaty on the basis of consensus, pursuant to the resolution that convened it. There is no need at this time to reiterate the comments and reservations that my country has expressed on the content of the Treaty and the process that led to its adoption by the General Assembly, but we hope that the provisions of that instrument will be applied in a transparent, balanced and non-discriminatory manner, while safeguarding the essential principles of international law and the Charter of the United Nations, such as the sovereign equality of States, self-determination, non-interference in the internal affairs of other States, territorial and political integrity and the right to legitimate self-defence. The authorities of my country, as was announced in our explanation of vote after the Treaty's adoption (see A/67/PV.71), will continue to analyse and verify its implementation in order to make a final determination regarding Ecuador's signature of or accession to it.

In line with its commitment to disarmament and universal peace and in strict respect for human rights and international humanitarian law, the Minister for Foreign Affairs and Human Mobility of Ecuador, Mr. Ricardo Patiño Aroca, deposited our ratification instrument for the Protocol against the Illicit Manufacturing of and Trafficking in Firearms, Their Parts and Components and Ammunition, supplementing the United Nations Convention against Transnational Organized Crime, on 25 September. Similarly, Ecuador has ratified the Convention on Cluster Munitions. Since civilians are the primary victims of those weapons, we would like to reiterate our commitment and support to the Convention on the Prohibition of the Use, Stockpiling, Production and Transfer of Anti-Personnel Mines and on Their Destruction.

Security in international relations should be based on trust and respect between States. The recent revelations of a massive and indiscriminate system that spies on the communications of every citizen on the planet is not only a violation of everyone's human rights, it is also an act that injects a serious element of instability into relations between States, damaging their sovereignty and, indeed, international security in general. My delegation is ready to participate in a bold, frank and open dialogue on that threat and will support more thorough efforts to find a suitable international mechanism, within the framework of standards for international law and human rights, for strengthening respect for the inviolability of the

electronic communications among all human beings on the planet.

In conclusion, in addition to conveying the Government of Ecuador's commitment to peace, universal disarmament and international security within a framework of full respect for international law, human rights and the Charter of the United Nations, my delegation reiterates its promise to collaborate within the First Committee.

**Mr. Al-Abri (Oman)** (*spoke in Arabic*): On behalf of the Permanent Mission of the Sultanate of Oman to the United Nations, it gives me great pleasure, Sir, to warmly congratulate you and your brotherly country, Libya, on your election to the Chair of the First Committee during the sixty-eighth session. My delegation is fully confident that your extensive diplomatic experience and commendable conduct of the Committee's work will produce positive results. I would be remiss if I did not also congratulate the members of the Bureau on their election.

I also express my thanks and appreciation to your predecessor, the Chair of the First Committee during the sixty-seventh session, and to his colleagues, the members of the Bureau, for their efforts during their tenure. My delegation is also grateful to Ms. Angela Kane, High Representative for Disarmament Affairs, for her comprehensive introductory statement (see A/C.1/68/PV.3).

The delegation of Oman fully supports the statements delivered by the Permanent Representatives of Indonesia and the Kingdom of Bahrain on behalf of the Non-Aligned Movement and the Arab Group, respectively (see A/C.1/68/PV.3).

Various series of meetings and high-level international conferences have been held for more than three decades as part of efforts to advance negotiations on nuclear disarmament and reduce the proliferation of nuclear weapons. My country reaffirms its support for nuclear non-proliferation and hopes that the agreements reached at the 2010 Review Conference of the Parties to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons, held in New York, will be translated into concrete reality.

My Government affirmed, in its statement in the general debate of the General Assembly at the beginning of this session, that it would continue to support initiatives aimed at making the Middle East a zone free of nuclear weapons and other weapons of

mass destruction, fully aware as we are of the dangers of such weapons and the threat that they represent to the security and stability of nations, regions and the entire world (see A/68/PV.21). We have emphasized the right of States to benefit from the use of nuclear energy for peaceful purposes; it should be noted, however, that resolving such differences should be achieved not through coercive policies and practices, such as sanctions and other restrictive measures, which weaken their effectiveness, but rather through a creative diplomacy that can enable every State to benefit from the use of nuclear energy for peaceful purposes.

Turning to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT), we hope that the international community, particularly the NPT depository countries, can work to persuade other Middle Eastern States to accede to the Treaty and submit their nuclear facilities for monitoring under the comprehensive safeguards system of the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA), thus eventually helping the Treaty to achieve universality and the Middle East to become a zone free of nuclear and all other weapons of mass destruction. That goal deserves the full support of every country, particularly the major Powers. My country regrets the fact that an international conference on the Middle East was not convened as agreed on at the 2010 NPT Review Conference; the refusal of certain parties to cooperate in its convening reflects a lack of understanding of the conditions, objectives and aspirations of the peoples of the Middle East.

The establishment of a zone free of nuclear weapons and other weapons of mass destruction in the Middle East is vitally important and deserves the backing of the international community. My country supports the proposal and calls on Israel to accede to the NPT and subject all its nuclear facilities to the comprehensive monitoring system established under the safeguards agreement of the International Atomic Energy Agency. That would enable the implementation of the 1995 agreement, which included the adoption of the resolution on the Middle East and functioned as a substantive link between the indefinite extension of the Treaty, on the one hand, and the establishment of a zone free of nuclear weapons and other weapons of mass destruction and Israel's compliance with such a regime, on the other. Unfortunately, there has been no concrete progress on that matter to date.

The delegation of Oman welcomes the decision by Syria to accede to the Convention on the Prohibition

of the Development, Production, Stockpiling and Use of Chemical Weapons and on Their Destruction, and we call on the international community to make every effort to establish a zone free of nuclear weapons and other weapons of mass destruction in the Middle East.

My country reiterates its full commitment to the 2001 United Nations Programme of Action to Prevent, Combat and Eradicate the Illicit Trade in Small Arms and Light Weapons in All Its Aspects. In that regard, we have for many years passed numerous laws and regulations designed to help combat such illicit trade.

In conclusion, my delegation calls on all Member States to abide by the commitments that they have made under treaties and conventions relating to disarmament, especially those concerning nuclear weapons and other weapons of mass destruction. My delegation hopes that under your leadership, Sir, the Committee's deliberations and decisions will help to achieve the desire of every person on the planet for a world of peace, security and stability.

**Mr. Kogda** (Burkina Faso) (*spoke in French*): On behalf of my delegation, I would like to congratulate you, Sir, on your election to the Chair of the First Committee. I would also like to extend my congratulations to the other members of the Bureau and assure them of my delegation's full support.

Burkina Faso associates itself with the statements made by the representatives of Nigeria and Indonesia on behalf of the African Group and the Non-Aligned Movement, respectively (see A/C.1/68/PV.3).

We are meeting at a time when international peace and security have been severely tested by the persistence of armed conflicts in certain countries, some of which have taken a dramatic turn owing to the use of weapons of mass destruction (WMDs), such as the chemical weapons recently used in Syria. That new escalation has had unpredictable consequences and has been strongly condemned by the international community. Fortunately, however, the conflict has been de-escalated with the Security Council's adoption, on 27 September, of resolution 2118 (2013), which authorizes the urgent and definitive destruction of chemical weapons in Syria. That decision sends a strong signal from the international community with respect to its willingness to genuinely embark upon the path to disarmament, in particular with regard to weapons of mass destruction. My delegation would like to thank the Organization for

the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons, which has just been awarded the Nobel Peace Prize for 2013.

Along the same lines, the international community should be clearer about its determination to uphold the commitments undertaken for the complete elimination of chemical, nuclear and other WMDs, and that indeed is what was reiterated at the eighth Conference on Facilitating the Entry into Force of the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty (CTBT), as well as the High-level Meeting on Nuclear Disarmament held last month on the margins of the current session (see A/68/PV.11).

It became clear in the course of those meetings that the goal of a world without nuclear weapons remained the only avenue to a world of peace and security. We note several positive steps in that direction, with the signing of the Treaty between the United States of America and the Russian Federation on Measures for the Further Reduction and Limitation of Strategic Offensive Arms, as well as the ratification of the CTBT by seven new members. Africa has already demonstrated its commitment in that realm, with the entry into force, on 15 July 2009, of the Treaty of Pelindaba, which makes the entire continent a nuclear-weapon-free zone.

Despite those advances, major concerns remain, including the fear of nuclear war, the paralysis in the Conference on Disarmament, the obstacles facing the convening of a conference on the establishment of a nuclear-weapon-free and WMD-free zone in the Middle East, ongoing nuclear testing, the near-permanent tensions in the Middle East and on the Korean peninsula, as well as the potential risks of the diversion of fissile material to terrorist groups.

My delegation believes that it is the duty of the nuclear-weapon States to join the global consensus by resolutely embarking on the path to nuclear disarmament and non-proliferation. Likewise, the Action Plan adopted by consensus at the 2010 Review Conference on the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons must be fully implemented. In that regard, my delegation reaffirms its position on the Treaty's three pillars, namely, nuclear disarmament, non-proliferation and the right of States to the peaceful use of nuclear energy.

The issue of conventional weapons, in particular small arms and light weapons, continues to be a major concern for the international community. Their negative impact and the ravages they cause is obvious to everyone, since civilians in conflict areas suffer

enormously. Such weapons fuel wars, sustain criminal and terrorist activities, hamper development efforts and undermine respect for human rights. Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon said as much in his remarks at the United Nations Conference on the Arms Trade Treaty, in July 2012 in New York, when he noted that armed violence killed half a million people every year, including 66,000 women and children.

In order to confront such scourges, a number of actions and initiatives have been undertaken and should be welcomed, in particular the General Assembly's adoption, in April, of the Arms Trade Treaty, which paved the way for greater control of the arms trade and the transfer of conventional weapons, including small arms and light weapons. We are pleased to note that today more than half of all Member States have signed the Treaty. We are convinced that the implementation of the 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 will contribute to reducing the suffering of people.

In our subregion, despite the strong political will of the Heads of State and Government of the Economic Community of Western African States (ECOWAS) and the existence of the relevant legal instruments, the fight against that scourge is proving difficult owing to the lack of sufficient means and the porousness of borders. For that reason, my delegation urgently appeals to the international community to provide training and technical and financial support to ECOWAS and other subregional organizations to enable them to fully implement the institutional and legal tools that they have developed.

To that end, we commend the United Nations for its unceasing and considerable efforts to support the institutional and operational initiatives of Member States aimed at peace and disarmament. We urge the Secretary-General to further scale up measures to support the regional centres of the United Nations for peace, disarmament and development, which constitute significant engines for strengthening the capacities of Member States.

Despite its limited resources, Burkina Faso continues to the best of its ability to contribute to peace and security in Africa and the subregion. Convinced that peace has no price, my country and its President, Mr. Blaise Compaoré, have agreed to lead numerous mediation missions to brother countries of the subregion to help them restore peace and security. Indeed, we

participate in peacekeeping missions with more than 2000 personnel in seven areas of operation.

In conclusion, Burkina Faso, which is party to the various treaties and conventions on disarmament, will continue its efforts to achieve a world of peace, freedom and sharing.

**Mr. Šćepanović** (Montenegro): Allow me first to congratulate you, Mr. Chair, and the other members of the Bureau on your election and to assure you of the full support of the Montenegrin delegation in the discharge of your important duties.

Montenegro fully aligns itself with the statement made by the observer of the European Union (see A/C.1/68/PV.3). In addition, I would like to add the following remarks in my national capacity.

Allow me to begin by expressing Montenegro's deep concern and strong condemnation of the recent use of chemical weapons in Syria. The use of chemical weapons is not permissible under any circumstance. Such weapons, in accordance with the relevant Geneva Protocol and the Chemical Weapons Convention, simply do not have a place in the twenty-first century. My delegation emphasizes the importance of bringing the perpetrators of that tragic and horrific act to justice. The incident of 21 August was yet another reminder of the responsibility of the international community to strengthen the global disarmament and non-proliferation regimes with regard to weapons of mass destruction in order to make sure that such weapons are never used again. To that end, we welcome and fully support Security Council resolution 2118 (2013) and the 27 September decision of the Executive Council of the Organization for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons on the destruction of Syria's chemical arsenal, which we sincerely hope and expect will be fully and promptly implemented.

Yet we continue to see the existence of nuclear weapons. Even the considerable reductions made so far represent only rather limited progress in the fields of nuclear disarmament and non-proliferation. It is against that backdrop that the General Assembly last year launched several initiatives concerning nuclear-disarmament negotiations that should be interpreted as calls for concrete advancement in reducing the global stockpile of nuclear weapons, which must eventually lead, sooner rather than later, to the creation of conditions enabling the total elimination of nuclear weapons. In that sense, the international community



must take a modern and pragmatic approach that is not trapped in the past but that is, instead, future-oriented in order to try to bridge existing differences and unify the efforts of nuclear and non-nuclear countries. The recognition of today's reality and an orientation towards our common future must prevail. The interrelated and multifaceted dimensions of the challenges we all face cannot be resolved by any single country but must be addressed through joint, coordinated efforts with a long-term perspective that excludes nuclear weapons.

We must also acknowledge the campaign to increase awareness of the possible catastrophic humanitarian consequences that the potential use of nuclear weapons presents for humankind. In the spirit, my country believes that the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons, as a cornerstone of the global nuclear disarmament and non-proliferation regime, is the critical foundation that must be better utilized in the pursuit of our ultimate goal, which is to build a safer world for all, one without nuclear weapons and other weapons of mass destruction (WMDs). Much work lies ahead of us, but Montenegro certainly remains strongly committed to that vision.

At the same time, we are fully aware of the serious threat to international peace and security posed by the proliferation of weapons of mass destruction. For that reason, the authorities in Montenegro, in cooperation with the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe and with the participation of experts from the Security Council Committee established pursuant to resolution 1540 (2004), are in the final stages of preparing a national action plan on the implementation of that resolution, with the aim of ensuring our full and effective compliance and its implementation.

The early entry into force of the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty (CTBT) must continue to be our priority, along with strengthening adherence to the additional protocol to the safeguards agreement of the International Atomic Energy Agency.

Another lost opportunity and critical development is the postponement of a conference on the establishment of a Middle East zone free of nuclear weapons and all other WMDs, and we deem crucial the earliest possible convening of such a conference. Montenegro welcomes the efforts of the facilitators and co-conveners in that regard and hopes that they will soon bear fruit.

We also note with regret, and share the general frustration at, the continuing stalemate in the

Conference on Disarmament (CD), which has been unable to perform its role for more than 15 years. Montenegro strongly supports ongoing efforts to break the CD deadlock so that substantive work and negotiations, even at this very late stage, can begin on all core issues on the Conference's agenda. We also remain very interested in the expansion of the CD membership and strongly support the appointment of a special coordinator to that end. In that context, allow me also to express our support for all efforts that could lead to the revitalization of the multilateral disarmament machinery.

On a positive note, let me pay tribute to the historic adoption of the landmark Arms Trade Treaty (ATT) in April by the General Assembly. From the outset, Montenegro supported and participated in the preparatory process, which eventually led to my country's signing the Treaty on the first day that it was open for signature. Efforts are under way in Montenegro to ratify the Treaty in the coming months. We will do our utmost to be among the first 50 States to do so, thereby enabling it to enter into force. Once the Treaty enters into force, we must put it to the best possible use and ensure its most effective and comprehensive implementation, which will inevitably entail working towards transforming the ATT into a truly universal treaty. We owe it to the millions of people around the world in conflict-affected areas who are waiting for the ATT to make a real difference in their lives. By exercising and promoting responsible trade and with high regard for human rights, Montenegro will remain firmly committed to that goal.

I would like to express the hope that the adoption of the ATT will provide a positive example and momentum for other global disarmament and non-proliferation actions. We must make maximum use of the opportunities presented to us, so that significant strides can be achieved on our long path towards a safer and more secure world. We need to galvanize our efforts and recommit ourselves to the principles of effective multilateralism, compromise and mutual trust in order to revitalize the United Nations disarmament machinery and strengthen its global disarmament and non-proliferation regime. Montenegro, for its part, is firmly dedicated to playing an active role and constructively contributing to that end. The Montenegrin delegation looks forward to engaging on the issues on the agenda of the First Committee and is open to pragmatic cooperation in all fields.

In that spirit, I would like to reiterate our support to you, Mr. Chair, in bringing this session to a fruitful conclusion.

**Mr. Ja'afari** (Syrian Arab Republic) (*spoke in Arabic*): I would like to congratulate you, Mr. Chair, on your election to lead the First Committee during this session. I would also like to congratulate the members of the Bureau and Ms. Angela Kane, High Commissioner for Disarmament Affairs, for her important and constructive role. I would like also to express my gratitude to the representative of Indonesia for his wise stewardship of the First Committee's proceedings during the previous session.

My country's delegation would like to associate itself with the statement made by the representative of Indonesia on behalf of the Non-Aligned Movement (see A/C.1/68/PV.3).

My country has fully supported, in words and deeds, the international movement towards building and establishing an international community free from the use of force, whether nuclear or conventional, and free from the threat of the use of force. Such a world would be based on the purposes and principles of the Charter of the United Nations, which are, in turn, based on justice, equal sovereignty and peace among nations and peoples.

Today we affirm our readiness to take part in any genuine international effort that aims to achieve those noble and longed-for goals. Our world, as the Committee knows, faces many challenges, first and foremost the threat of the proliferation of weapons of mass destruction, especially nuclear weapons, whether horizontally or vertically. That danger is further intensified by the threats made by certain Governments to use such weapons to achieve political goals, aspirations and gains. At this point, we would like to note that, more than 40 years after the signing of the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT), it has now become necessary for nuclear-weapon States to abide by article VI of the Treaty: they must make serious efforts to achieve nuclear disarmament.

My country reaffirms the inalienable right of NPT member States, in accordance with article IV of the Treaty, to acquire and develop nuclear technology and employ it for peaceful purposes in cooperation with the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA). The Agency must do its part in facilitating cooperation among States in the area of the use of nuclear energy

for peaceful purposes. My country would object to any attempt to interpret texts in a manner that seeks to undermine that right or limit its use.

It is truly a strange irony these days that the representative of an entity that is not a party to the NPT — a party that has nuclear military programmes — should appoint itself a defender of nuclear non-proliferation, taking advantage of its status as a State that is a non-member of the Non-Proliferation Treaty. How can someone who refuses to join the NPT criticize the States party to the Treaty? Is that not an odd situation? Is that situation not enough to threaten the credibility of international collective action and the universality of the NPT? Is that political hypocrisy not a mistaken interpretation of the very concept of nuclear non-proliferation? Moreover, why is there leniency towards outlaws, and why is there unanimous agreement to give that outlaw an opportunity to appear before the General Assembly and belittle the intelligence of people and provoke their emotions?

The Conference on Disarmament is the sole multilateral negotiations forum for discussing issues of disarmament. It is important to respect the procedural rules and regulations of the Conference, which are a necessary basis for ensuring the success of any action that is to be agreed on. We affirm, in that respect, the need for the Conference to adopt a balanced and comprehensive programme of work and for that programme to include the establishment of subsidiary bodies to negotiate a plan for the complete elimination of nuclear weapons within a fixed time frame that is binding and unconditional. Moreover, we call for negotiations to achieve a legally binding international instrument on negative security assurances to non-nuclear-weapon States, including on the use or threat of use of nuclear weapons. Furthermore, we should undertake negotiations on preventing an arms race in outer space and banning the production of fissile materials.

With regard to the illicit trade in small arms and light weapons, the current state of the world shows us all how some large and some smaller countries have been involved, either as producing or as non-producing countries, in the transfer of small arms and light weapons to terrorist groups, non-State actors and illegal and mercenary armed groups, with the purpose of creating and fostering crises and undermining the stability of entire countries or regions in the service of the geopolitical and economic interests of those States.

The terrorist attacks that have been committed in Syria by groups that aspire to and support Al-Qaida's extremist ideology would not have succeeded without the support — in the form of arms, weapons, money and training — of Arab, regional and international parties, who are known to everyone and are well-known for supporting terrorist actions within Syrian territories. One of our most important concerns with regard to the Arms Trade Treaty was the absence of clear and specific language in the Treaty stipulating an absolute prohibition on the export of weapons to terrorist elements and armed groups. At the time, we were criticized by some parties that did not realize the gravity of the situation and its potential negative impact on international peace and security.

The Government of Syria strongly condemns the use of chemical weapons and considers it an abominable crime for which its perpetrators must be held accountable. But we are of the opinion that such accountability must not be relative or lenient when it comes to the Governments of countries that have drawn the terrorists of the world into Syria, trained them in neighbouring countries and furnished them with money and weapons, including chemical weapons. Accountability must apply to everyone, without double standards. Anyone who uses weapons of mass destruction must stand before justice. As we know, there is no statute of limitations on accountability for that type of crime. Accountability needs to be imposed on the strong and the weak, without discrimination or distinction, based on our conviction that the use of weapons of mass destruction, including chemical weapons, is a matter that has been rejected as immoral and condemnable in the light of recent developments.

Out of concern for the Syrian Arab Republic and for the security of the country and its citizens, Syria has joined the 1992 Convention on the Prohibition of the Development, Production, Stockpiling and Use of Chemical Weapons and on Their Destruction. Moreover, my country has signed a framework agreement with the Organization for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons on bilateral cooperation in dismantling chemical weapons materials.

It is worth noting that Syria joined the 1925 Geneva Protocol before Israel did. Israel's nuclear weapons are the main obstacle standing in the way of ridding the Middle East region of all weapons of mass destruction. After Syria joined the Chemical Weapons Convention, it renewed its call upon Member States to work on

creating a Middle East zone free of weapons of mass destruction. We would like to recall, in that context, an initiative proposed towards the end of 2003 and during its membership in the Security Council. Syria calls upon the Council to adopt that initiative. Syria reaffirms that creating a Middle East region free of weapons of mass destruction will not be possible without Israel joining, because Israel is the sole nuclear Power in the region. Israel must join all conventions that ban those weapons and must place its nuclear installations under International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) supervision, without any interpretative reservations, without any prior conditions and on an equal footing with the rest of the States Members of the United Nations and the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT).

Some nuclear-weapon States have furnished Israel with modern and advanced nuclear technology over several decades. They continue to protect Israel's nuclear monopoly and exceptionalism, contrary to the articles of the NPT. That has provided Israel with the opportunity to produce and manufacture nuclear weapons and their means of delivery, thereby jeopardizing peace and security in the entire Middle East and the surrounding regions. In that connection, we would like to warn of the continued international silence over Israel's positions, which have moved from a policy of nuclear ambiguity to the explicit declaration that it does possess nuclear weapons and threatens to use them. Such silence is unusual and odd, and it can be considered a way for those supporting and colluding with Israel to defend and protect it from anything that the international community might hold it responsible for, which in turn damages the collective credibility of the multilateral nuclear non-proliferation regime.

We affirm that the outcome of the 2010 Review Conference of the Parties to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons calling for the establishment of a zone free of nuclear weapons in the Middle East, based on the 1995 NPT Review and Extension Conference, makes it important for the international community to work towards that goal by pressuring Israel to join the NPT as a non-nuclear-weapon State, as is the case with all the other countries in the region. Israel must place all its nuclear facilities and activities under the IAEA's comprehensive safeguards regime, in accordance with Security Council resolution 487 (1981) and IAEA resolution 17 of 2009, not to mention other relevant General Assembly resolutions, in order to maintain international peace and security.

Most countries had looked forward to the convening of a successful conference on a zone in the Middle East free of nuclear weapons and all other forms of weapons of mass destruction, which was to be held in Helsinki at the end of 2012. However, Israel's announcement during the IAEA General Conference in September 2012 that it would not participate in the conference caused the plan to convene the conference to fail, nullifying all of the international efforts that were exerted from the 2010 NPT Review Conference. That gives somewhat of an impression that the holding of the conference must be designed in such a way as to suit Israel and its interests, instead of Israel being forced to participate in the conference.

The Government of the Syrian Arab Republic was the party that took the initiative to request the Secretary-General to open an investigation into the crime of the use of chemical weapons by certain terrorist organizations in Khan Al-Assal, near Aleppo province, and it has helped the United Nations mission to investigate allegations of the use of chemical weapons, headed by Mr. Sellström, in every way it can. In that regard, we would like to reaffirm our willingness to implement all of the provisions of the Chemical Weapons Convention and to cooperate with the OPCW, which currently has a team in Syria. The Syrian Government pledges to help the team do its job fully and offers all forms of constructive cooperation.

Damascus is still waiting for the Secretariat to follow through on its obligations and commitments towards the Syrian Government, pursuant to the agreement signed between the two parties, which involves investigating the crime of the use of chemical weapons in Khan Al-Assal and incorporating the results of the investigation of this crime into the comprehensive final report that is to be issued by the mission of investigation.

In conclusion, we would like to call upon Member States to fulfil their responsibilities and abide by the relevant international conventions and treaties to put an end to the smuggling of weapons and related materials in all their forms, be they lethal or non-lethal. We call upon States to stop smuggling militants and terrorists through the borders of Syria's neighbours. We warn everyone that the phenomenon of terrorism is going to revert back to those countries, sooner or later.

**Mr. Sareer** (Maldives): Let me begin by congratulating you, Mr. Chair, and the other members

of the Bureau on your election to guide the work of the First Committee. I would like to assure you, Sir, of my delegation's full support in the work ahead. Let me also take this opportunity to thank the High Representative for Disarmament Affairs, Ms. Angela Kane, and the United Nations Office for Disarmament Affairs for their efforts to support the work of the Committee.

One might wonder why a country as tiny as the Maldives — one that does not produce any weaponry, let alone nuclear weapons — is speaking at this meeting. One might wonder what such a country can say about international security in addressing non-proliferation, stockpiling, arms in outer space or even general disarmament. A country such as ours cannot do much to contribute to making the world a safe place for future generations, but we can most certainly highlight the dangers that weapons of mass destruction pose. We can talk about the futility of wasting what precious little resources we have on research and the development of such weapons, when those resources could otherwise be used for development. We can give moral support to those States standing up for non-proliferation and disarmament.

We followed the first-ever High-level Meeting on Nuclear Disarmament (see A/68/PV.11) convened at the General Assembly with great interest and hope. Our hope was that the momentum demonstrated in the high level of participation and the strong support voiced during the event would help us to move forward on those critical issues.

We cannot state often enough that small States like the Maldives are not contributors to the world's ills. Just as we are not the cause of global climate change, we do not deal in arms, we do not produce or stockpile nuclear weapons, nor do we take part in arms races. Yet should a nuclear strike occur, its effects would ripple across our community of nations — in waves the height and breadth of tsunamis. We know today that no nation on Earth has the ability to deal with the humanitarian consequences of a nuclear strike. We therefore welcome the increased attention devoted to the humanitarian impact of nuclear weapons at the conference on the topic held in Oslo this year, and expect to see the same in Mexico next year. We believe that we have a moral obligation and a responsibility to raise our voice on that issue.

As Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon said a few years ago, a world free of nuclear weapons would be



a global public good of the highest order. We therefore call on all nations to work together towards that ultimate goal through the United Nations disarmament machinery, especially the Conference on Disarmament. We believe the negotiation of a fissile material cut-off treaty, the long-overdue entry into force of the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty (CTBT) and the commencement of negotiations towards a comprehensive convention on nuclear weapons to prohibit their possession, development, production, acquisition, testing, stockpiling, transfer, use or threat of use and to provide for their destruction, would be vital steps in the right direction. In that regard, the Maldives would also like to emphasize the importance of the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT) and its three pillars, which also helps to reach the goal of complete disarmament as agreed in the Treaty's article VI.

Non-proliferation and disarmament are mutually reinforcing, and pursuing non-proliferation alone is both counterproductive and unsustainable. Furthermore, the NPT enshrines the right of each State to the peaceful uses of nuclear energy, which is a right that needs to be upheld. The Maldives also calls for the implementation of the Action Plan adopted at the 2010 NPT Review Conference.

The Maldives supports international arms control and counter-proliferation initiatives, including nuclear non-proliferation and disarmament activities. The Maldives is party to a number of international conventions on disarmament and arms control, including the Non-Proliferation Treaty, the Chemical Weapons Convention, the CTBT and the Biological Weapons Convention. We have submitted regular reports pursuant to the relevant provisions of those conventions; we participate in and comply with them, even though we are not involved in any of the activities banned by them. In that regard, we join other States in welcoming the Syrian Government's recent signing of the Convention on the Prohibition of the Development, Production, Stockpiling and Use of Chemical Weapons and on Their Destruction. In addition, we congratulate the Organization for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons for being awarded the Nobel Peace Prize and commend it for its extensive efforts to eliminate chemical weapons.

Global peace and security can be achieved only through the eradication of all nuclear weapons. The only way to effectively eliminate those weapons would be

for the nuclear-weapon States to destroy their weapons and for threshold States to give up their ambitions to develop them. I know there are dissenting voices from that view. I know there are those who believe that having nuclear weapons is an indispensable insurance policy and a status symbol of great power. But I urge those nations to compare those views with the recent events that raise concerns over the humanitarian consequences of nuclear weapons and other weapons of mass destruction. It was only recently we saw the real and significant danger and the unbelievable human cost of the use of chemical weapons in Syria. It was only a few weeks ago that we, the United Nations, condemned that use of chemical weapons. It is our hope that those events will help to shape the global consensus about nuclear and other weapons of mass destruction.

While the threat posed by nuclear weapons and other weapons of mass destruction is clear, we are also often reminded of the damage that can be caused when small arms and light weapons fall into the wrong hands. The build-up of small arms and light weapons stockpiles is a cause for alarm, as it increases the risk of civil wars escalating into large-scale regional or international conflicts. It is a sign of hope — and a sign of the growing solidarity behind the principles that we gather here today to defend — that the General Assembly adopted the Arms Trade Treaty earlier this year. We believe that the Treaty is an important step in the right direction, especially as to its prohibition of the transfer by States of conventional weapons to countries where the transferring State knows that those weapons will be used to commit or facilitate crimes against humanity.

The Maldives' stringent domestic laws and means of control have ensured that the illicit trade in arms does not occur at all, either within the local population or with other countries. The Maldives annually submits its report to the United Nations Register of Conventional Arms. However, there have been indications that Maldivian territorial waters have been used in the past as a transshipment point for illicit arms destined for third party entities. The Maldives therefore hopes to join the 113 States that have signed the Arms Trade Treaty in the near future.

The Maldives also supports the creation of nuclear-weapon-free zones around the globe, particularly in regions that are more volatile. Nuclear-weapon-free zones are important, as they open up possibilities for regional dialogue on security issues, for just as each

region is unique, so are each region's security concerns. Those regional initiatives can then be translated to the wider international community.

The Maldives has continuously supported the establishment of the Indian Ocean as a zone of peace. Since the adoption of the declaration, developments in the Cold War power dynamics and the issues prevalent in the region have changed the context significantly. There have been many new challenges and dynamics involving threats to security that call for due consideration. I therefore consider it a matter of the utmost importance to convene focused discussions on that topic in the context of the General Assembly at its sixty-eighth session, in order to address new challenges and to reinvigorate the idea and fashion it so as to attract broader acceptance. It is our hope that cooperation among the countries of the Indian Ocean and the other Powers concerned will enable us to find practical ways to fulfil the aspirations of our peoples through the proposed zone of peace.

As responsible citizens of the global community of nations, we have an obligation to future generations to protect and to preserve. We have obligations to the present generation to ensure that the limited resources of today's world are used in the best way possible and that resources are allocated where they are most needed. It is therefore a shame that one in eight people worldwide still suffers from chronic hunger, while more than \$100 billion is spent on global nuclear weapons. It is a shame that nuclear weapons spending is roughly equal to 80 per cent of total official development assistance, especially at a time when the General Assembly is calling for countries to fulfil their commitments to achieve the Millennium Development Goals.

It is a shame that the annual operating budget of the Office for Disarmament Affairs is approximately \$10 million, which is less than the amount spent by the nuclear-armed nations on nuclear weapons every hour. In the words of Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon, "the world is over-armed and peace is under-funded". Every dollar spent on nuclear weapons and other weapons of mass destruction is a dollar that could have been spent on overcoming poverty in our countries. It is a dollar that could be spent on educating a child, on eradicating non-communicable diseases or on hospitals, food, clean water, climate-change adaptation or building resilience. Every dollar that is spent on such weapons is a dollar that could be invested in our shared future.

**Mr. Ejinaka (Nigeria):** My delegation would like to join others who have spoken before us in congratulating you, Sir, on your election as Chair of the First Committee. We have no doubt that our work will benefit tremendously from your experience, expertise and commitment. We assure you of our full support and cooperation.

We also wish to commend your predecessor, His Excellency Mr. Desra Percaya of Indonesia, for his leadership and commendable efforts in supporting the cause of disarmament.

Nigeria aligns itself with the statement of the Non-Aligned Movement, delivered by the Permanent Representative of Indonesia, and that of the African Group, delivered by my delegation (see A/C.1/68/PV.3).

At the sixty-seventh session of the General Assembly, having assessed a number of daunting issues that had confronted our world in past years, as well as the minimum action required to address them, the delegation of Nigeria highlighted what it considered to be the minimum requirements to ensure appropriate follow-up to our commitments on disarmament.

There is no doubt that our world remains on the threshold. We are daily confronted by a number of probabilities, including the threat of use or the actual use of a wide range of weapons capable of destroying cities, harming populations and ruining civilizations. They range from nuclear, chemical and biological weapons to illicitly acquired small arms and light weapons.

In spite of the challenges, we remain optimistic that the international community will see the need for concerted action to address those issues of grave importance. The optimism expressed by my delegation is premised on the series of measures taken to facilitate the global agenda on disarmament and international security and the positive impact that those measures could produce in the future.

Since the previous session, my delegation has noted renewed efforts to address a wide spectrum of challenges to disarmament, non-proliferation and international security. My delegation welcomes the successful adoption of the resolution on the Arms Trade Treaty (resolution 67/234 B) in April as a step in the right direction. We also note the enthusiasm shown by participants during the second session of the Preparatory Committee for the Review Conference

of the Parties to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons, as well as the convening of the historic High-level Meeting on Nuclear Disarmament (see A/68/PV.11).

Nevertheless, despite what some may consider achievements, my delegation remains deeply concerned about the lack of far-reaching and meaningful progress, particularly on the issue of nuclear disarmament. We reaffirm our belief that nuclear weapons represent the ultimate weapon of mass destruction and their total elimination should be the final objective of all United Nations disarmament processes.

In view of that, we continue to restate our opposition to the modernization of existing nuclear weapons and development of new types. We consider the continued existence and possession of nuclear weapons to be inimical to the promotion of international peace and security. If goodwill and common sense will not rid the world of those doomsday weapons, we believe enlightened self-interest should prevail on those possessing nuclear weapons to get rid of them. As has variously been expressed, they offer no credible defence against other enemies possessing similar weapons and pose an existential threat to those who possess none at all.

If the overarching goal of nuclear disarmament is a world free of nuclear weapons, then the world could, at the least, demonstrate that the possession and retention of more than 20,000 nuclear warheads, of which a considerable number are held in a state of alert and readiness, in the arsenals of States remain not only unacceptable, but should be repudiated. Compliance with the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT) should, in our view, go hand in hand with the willingness of the nuclear-weapon States to disarm and disavow the continued possession of such weapons. At the moment, the astronomical cost of the global defence budget remains at an unacceptable level.

Despite its unsatisfactory outcome, Nigeria welcomes the second session of the Preparatory Committee for the 2015 NPT Review Conference, which has yet to provide an opportunity for assessing the implementation of the Treaty. We believe that that meeting and the one remaining session before 2015 should contribute to the overall strategy aimed at the full implementation of the Action Plan adopted at the 2010 NPT Review Conference, in terms of nuclear disarmament, nuclear non-proliferation and the peaceful uses of nuclear energy, as well as the implementation of

the 1995 resolution on the Middle East. In that regard, we look forward, despite the disappointing postponement of the Helsinki conference, to the scheduling of a new date for the conference on the establishment of a Middle East zone free of nuclear weapons and all other weapons of mass destruction.

We will continue to support the call for effective assurances to all non-nuclear-weapon States against the use or threat of use of nuclear weapons by nuclear-weapon States. We stress the necessity of concluding a universal, unconditional and legally binding instrument on negative security assurances to all non-nuclear-weapon States.

The delegation of Nigeria welcomes the Conference on Facilitating the Entry into Force of the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty. Nigeria believes in the propriety of achieving universal adherence to the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty (CTBT), as per the meeting convened in this same room exactly two weeks ago. We commend Chad, Guinea-Bissau and Iraq on their recent ratifications of the CTBT. The intrinsic value of the CTBT in setting a global norm against any kind of nuclear explosion, which enables the international community to immediately respond to any challenges to the established norm, cannot be overstressed. We recognize it as essential to promoting the process of nuclear disarmament. We take this opportunity to call on all States that have not signed or ratified the Treaty, in particular annex 2 States, to do so.

With regard to the Conference on Disarmament (CD), we reiterate that its long-standing inability to agree on a programme of work and act in fulfilment of its mandate from the General Assembly, pursuant to the first special session of the General Assembly devoted to disarmament, is adversely affecting its reputation and credibility. We hope that the CD can benefit from, among other things, the momentum generated by the open-ended working group to develop proposals to take forward multilateral nuclear disarmament negotiations for the achievement and maintenance of a world without nuclear weapons, established by the Assembly last year, as well as the High-level Meeting on Nuclear Disarmament.

The unequivocal message conveyed to the CD by way of those efforts was that the world had been disappointed by the stalemate in the CD and its perennial non-performance. We call for the impasse to be overcome; it has, for close to two decades, made

the annual sessions of the Conference on Disarmament barren and devoid of any satisfactory outcome. Clearly, that is not a situation that should be allowed to go on indefinitely. Nigeria calls for the urgent revitalization of the Conference on Disarmament. Its membership should be reviewed and expanded. The Conference should also welcome greater engagement from civil society, and Member States should demonstrate the political will and commitment necessary to break the current impasse and move the process forward.

In the same context, we support the call for the immediate commencement of the long-delayed negotiations on a fissile material cut-off treaty (FMCT). We hope that the upcoming group of governmental experts on an FMCT will come up with useful ideas on the way forward by addressing all issues related to the treaty, including negotiations on existing stocks of fissile material.

Having acceded to the universal Chemical Weapons Convention (CWC) and the Biological/Toxins Weapons Convention, and in view of the recent unfortunate case of the use of chemical weapons in Syria, my delegation feels the compelling need to call on the remaining States that have not ratified those two Conventions to do so without delay.

Like many others before us, we welcome the successful outcome of the final United Nations Conference on the Arms Trade Treaty, which led to the adoption of the Arms Trade Treaty as resolution 67/234 B in April 2013. Nigeria signed and ratified the Treaty on 12 August. We take this opportunity to commend the efforts of Ambassadors Roberto García Moritán and Peter Woolcott and Member States for their constructive contributions to that seven-year project. We also call for the cooperation of all to ensure its early entry into force.

My delegation acknowledges that an unregulated conventional arms transfer system fuels illicit trade and invariably leads to unfettered access and unauthorized use by non-State actors, individuals and groups. As a measure of their commitment to world peace and in pursuit of the objectives of the Assembly, we urge major arms producers and exporters to ratify the Treaty and work towards appropriate implementation upon its entry into force. In addition, Nigeria welcomes the successful conclusion of the second United Nations Conference to Review Progress Made in the Implementation of the Programme of Action to Prevent, Combat and Eradicate the Illicit Trade in Small Arms and Light Weapons in

All Its Aspects. My delegation continues to stress that a successful implementation of the Programme of Action is largely dependent upon international cooperation and assistance. In that regard, my delegation looks forward to the fifth Biennial Meeting of States on the Programme of Action on Small Arms in 2014 and promises to work with the Chair-designate as he commences consultations in earnest.

We want to emphasize the importance of the First Committee to the realization of the objectives of the Charter of the United Nations. We reiterate that the ethos of multilateralism remains the safest guarantee of international peace and security. My delegation will therefore continue to work constructively in the Committee and all other forums towards achieving the goal of disarmament.

**Ms. Higgie** (New Zealand): New Zealand welcomes once again the opportunity that the First Committee gives us — this time under the guidance of Ambassador Ibrahim Dabbashi as Chair — to review the past year's disarmament and arms-control balance sheet and to outline some of our aspirations for the year ahead. We congratulate Ambassador Dabbashi on his election.

We also associate ourselves with the statement delivered earlier this week by the representative of Egypt on behalf of the New Agenda Coalition (see A/C.1/68/PV.5).

I think that the big win over the past year was, without a doubt, the successful conclusion and adoption by the General Assembly of the Arms Trade Treaty. As Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon has said, the ATT advances global efforts to bring the rule of law to the conventional arms trade. That is no mean feat. The overwhelming support for the Treaty is amply demonstrated by the fact that there are already 113 signatories, my country among them — certainly an unusually high number at such an early stage in the lifespan of a treaty. I would particularly wish to congratulate those seven countries that have already, within four months of its adoption, ratified it. Others, I know, will follow shortly: 42 to go, and then the ATT enters into force.

Increasingly, over time, the Treaty will contribute significantly to the protection of civilian populations and to improved regional and global security. It is, then, a real win, both for the security of States and for human security, in its own terms. It does not need to be cited as proof that the United Nations can truly do something:



that, for my delegation, had never been in doubt. The United Nations has always been able to do something when and if we, its Members, do not stand in the way.

It is not lost on New Zealand that the ATT came into being because our mode of operation during its negotiation was broadly based on General Assembly procedures, and, throughout the negotiations, the ATT process retained the option — ultimately, indeed, taken up — to revert completely to standard General Assembly rules of procedure. In that process, at least, the will of the very few was allowed to trump the interests of the vast majority.

Another win in the sphere of conventional arms this year was demonstrated very recently when States parties to the Oslo Convention on Cluster Munitions (CCM) met last month in Lusaka. Like the Ottawa Convention on Landmines, the CCM is another essential instrument of international humanitarian law serving to protect civilians from the indiscriminate effects of weapons systems. The norm it establishes already has considerable force on the international stage, and any use of cluster munitions — such as occurred most recently in Syria — has been met with strong condemnation.

Steady progress on universalization is apparent as regards both the Ottawa and the Oslo treaties. We hope that Zambia's aspiration, as this year's President of the Convention on Cluster Munitions, to see Africa be the first continent to subscribe universally to the CCM, will indeed be successful. As the Convention's coordinator for national implementation, New Zealand has also offered its assistance to Ghana as host for the meeting to be held next March to draft a pan-Africa model of implementing legislation.

Many, if not all, of us here would say that the big loss of the past year has been the horrific use of chemical weapons — an extraordinarily inhumane and outlawed class of weapons of mass destruction — in Syria. Rightly, those weapons are now being destroyed, and one can say that the rule of law on that issue is being re-established there.

That, of course, can be of little real comfort to the Syrian citizens, or their grieving families, who were the victims of those weapons. Nor are those people likely to draw comfort from the probability that their plight has served to highlight the anomaly that the most destructive and uncivilized of all weapons — nuclear

weapons — remain the only weapons of mass destruction not banned by an international treaty.

The multilateral negotiating forum charged with dealing with that problem — the Conference on Disarmament — rests in paralysis, unable, for instance, to begin implementing any of the three tasks assigned to it under the 2010 Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty Action Plan, notably action 6, action 7 or action 15. Nonetheless, for the first time in quite some while, my delegation sees cause for optimism in the prospects for greater movement towards nuclear disarmament. The desire to move beyond the past 17 years of much input but no output from the Conference on Disarmament was reflected in the fact that most of us attended the Oslo Conference in March. That ground-breaking initiative by the Government of Norway provided a platform for considering the humanitarian consequences of the detonation of any nuclear weapon. The safety of ordinary citizens and the well-being of our planet in the wake of any use of nuclear weapons were uppermost on the Oslo agenda. And on that agenda, nuclear weapons must surely score as low, and therefore as dangerous, on the barometer as we can go. New Zealand looks forward to the second conference on that topic, to be hosted next February by the Government of Mexico, which will continue to put nuclear weapons' consequences for human security at the forefront of discussions on nuclear disarmament. We believe that such efforts will reinforce the campaign to advance all the objectives of the NPT and not simply our shared responsibility to move forward on article VI.

As coordinator at the General Assembly's sixty-eighth session for the joint statement on the humanitarian Consequences of nuclear weapons, I would like to take this opportunity to advise all delegations that the text is available as of today, and we look forward to widespread support for it once again.

This year's meetings of the open-ended working group on taking forward multilateral nuclear disarmament negotiations were testament to the fact that the roadblock in the Conference on Disarmament need not necessarily distract us from forward movement on nuclear disarmament. We welcomed the constructive discussions that took place in the Working Group under Ambassador Dengo's chairmanship and that were reflected in its final report, presented to the General Assembly (see A/68/514). My delegation particularly relished the opportunity to explore the implications of nuclear weapons for international law, including

international humanitarian law. That is, in fact, the subject matter of a side event that New Zealand and Switzerland are sponsoring at the First Committee next Friday, 18 October.

We draw further optimism from the overwhelming support for nuclear disarmament evident at last month's High-level Meeting on Nuclear Disarmament (see A/68/PV.11). In speaking on that occasion, my Prime Minister signalled his expectation that the international community must make better progress on nuclear disarmament. We hope that the High-level Meeting will give new political impetus to help the NPT deliver on its promises. The NPT's commitment to disarmament was made at the same time as and on the same basis as the commitment not to proliferate. We continue to call on all countries to live up to the promises on both sides of the ledger sheet and for the Treaty's universalization as well. The session of next year's Preparatory Committee for the 2015 NPT Review Conference and action on the decisions relating to the implementation of the 1995 resolution on the Middle East, including the convening of a 2012 conference, will certainly be very important for the ongoing health and well-being of the NPT regime. In saying that, we do not, of course, overlook the strenuous efforts that have been made to bring about a 2012 conference, especially on the part of Ambassador Laajava of Finland.

We continue to call for the entry into force of the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty (CTBT). That call is reflected in the draft resolution on the CTBT, coordinated this year by New Zealand. We very much welcome the Treaty's recent ratification by Brunei Darussalam, Chad, Guinea-Bissau and Iraq and continue to call on all States, annex 2 countries in particular, to follow their example and become party to the Treaty as soon as possible.

Taking stock of the year behind us and the year ahead, it is clear that there is both good and not-so-good news to record. In the good-news category, I would include, above all, the increased focus on the well-being and security of the individual within our societies, as well as the discernible emphasis on international humanitarian law and the importance of abiding by its terms. Of course, when we do not meet its requirements or when we fail to move forward — on nuclear disarmament, for example, or on other aspects of the humanitarian agenda — it is almost always our individual citizens who are the ones to pay the price.

**Mr. Och** (Mongolia): At the outset, I would like to congratulate the Chair and the other members of the Bureau on their election, and to assure them of my delegation's full support for their leadership and efforts in addressing the important work of the Committee. I also wish to take this opportunity to express our appreciation to the High Representative for Disarmament Affairs, Ms. Angela Kane, and her Office for their commendable efforts and work.

As a participant in the international disarmament machinery and party to international disarmament instruments, my delegation wishes to reiterate Mongolia's firm commitment and desire to contribute to strengthening international peace and security and to building trust in the region and worldwide. We welcome the positive developments that have occurred this year in the fields of disarmament, nuclear non-proliferation and arms control. The High-level Meeting on Nuclear Disarmament held in the General Assembly on 26 September (see A/68/PV.11) created momentum for taking meaningful steps towards achieving our disarmament goals. Mongolia still believes in a bold vision of a world free of nuclear weapons and will continue to contribute to global efforts on nuclear disarmament.

Recalling the joint declaration of 17 September 2012 by five of the nuclear-weapon States, recognizing Mongolia's nuclear-weapon-free status, my delegation wishes to express once again its appreciation to the five permanent members of the Security Council for the concrete steps they have taken to contribute to nuclear disarmament and the non-proliferation of nuclear weapons. We do not believe that nuclear-weapon States are interested in putting humankind in unimaginable danger. We trust that they will abide by their commitments and exercise their responsibility to work towards the goal of a world without nuclear weapons.

It is an indisputable fact that nuclear-weapon-free zones strengthen both nuclear disarmament and non-proliferation, and thereby international peace and security. As a strong advocate of such zones, Mongolia is hopeful that international efforts will yield progress in establishing a zone free of nuclear weapons in the Middle East.

The Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty (CTBT) is a catalyst for nuclear disarmament and a strong instrument for non-proliferation. Mongolia

welcomes the Treaty's recent ratification by Chad, Guinea-Bissau and Iraq. Progress on the CTBT is the single multilateral non-proliferation and disarmament action most urgently awaited by the international community. It is also one in which progress can be achieved in a relatively short time. The CTBT should therefore be brought into force as soon as possible, and we call on those States that have not ratified it, in particular the remaining annex 2 States, to do so urgently.

Senior diplomats, experts, inspectors, scientists, lawyers, journalists and academics, from every sector and at every level, have worked tirelessly for nuclear disarmament and have been a great source of inspiration as we attempt to move forward. The Secretary-General's five-point proposal, the international Global Zero campaign and many other valuable initiatives all call for practical, systematic and progressive nuclear-disarmament efforts and, ultimately, for a world free of nuclear weapons. Their carefully-thought-through ideas, proposals and road maps for achieving the ultimate goal should be shared by all States and all peoples. To follow up on that inspiration, Mongolia joins the call to designate 26 September as an international day for the total elimination of nuclear weapons. A global campaign of that type will definitely foster willingness to live up to disarmament obligations and enhance public awareness of and education on the threat that nuclear weapons pose to humankind and the importance of their total elimination.

On the other hand, the international disarmament machinery that we set up must work vigorously, and we need to resume our deliberations immediately. Mongolia therefore calls for the urgent commencement of negotiations in the Conference on Disarmament. We need to end the stalemate and avoid any further erosion of the Conference's ability to fulfil its mandate. We must not abandon the momentum that could lead to the proposed high-level international conference on nuclear disarmament.

Today, people around the world are distressed by the endless cycle of conflicts. Military force and weapons are being used to settle disputes. The grave situation in the Syrian Arab Republic is the latest example of that. We express the hope that the United States-Russian initiative will bear fruit and lead to a peaceful resolution of the Syrian conflict.

Mongolia firmly stands for non-proliferation and the complete elimination of weapons of mass

destruction, and welcomes Security Council resolution 2118 (2013). We cannot tolerate the use of chemical weapons, and we strongly condemn any violation of universally accepted international law.

The potential spread of weapons of mass destruction to non-State actors remains an immediate threat to international peace and security. My delegation believes that the 2012 High-level Meeting on Countering Nuclear Terrorism, held at the General Assembly, was an important step forward in efforts to promote international cooperation and strengthen the legal framework in that area. We should continue to build our capacity to implement all four pillars of the United Nations Global Counter-Terrorism Strategy and the relevant resolutions of the General Assembly. Mongolia reaffirms its commitment to Security Council resolution 1540 (2004).

The adoption of the Arms Trade Treaty (ATT) by the General Assembly was another diplomatic achievement to be valued. My delegation believes that the Treaty will be a powerful tool for preventing human rights abuses and violations of international humanitarian law. Mongolia has therefore joined the 113 signatories of the ATT.

The illicit trade in small arms and light weapons continues to fuel armed violence, and the challenge posed by the proliferations of small arms and related materials remains on our agenda. We need to take the Programme of Action to Prevent, Combat and Eradicate the Illicit Trade in Small Arms and Light Weapons in All Its Aspects seriously and continue to make a progress in that area. We welcome the inclusion of the issue of small arms and light weapons in the ATT and the adoption of the first-ever resolution on that matter by the Security Council.

*Mr. Nikolić (Montenegro), Vice-Chair, took the floor.*

**Mr. Kebret (Ethiopia):** As this is the first time my delegation takes the floor, let me congratulate the Chair of the First Committee and the other members of the Bureau on their election and express my appreciation to them for the manner in which they have been steering our deliberations.

Ethiopia aligns itself with the statements made by the representatives of Nigeria on behalf of the African Group and Indonesia on behalf of the Non-Aligned Movement (see A/C.1/68/PV.3).

Today, both weapons of mass destruction and conventional arms continue to pose serious threats to the maintenance of international peace and security. The threats that such weapons represent are multifaceted and complex, requiring therefore a globally coordinated and effective response. Curbing the escalation of the nuclear arms race and reducing the stockpile of other weapons of mass destruction through the full implementation of existing conventions and treaties are of paramount importance. In that regard, States need to respect and implement the provisions of the international treaties and conventions that they are party to.

My delegation wishes to reiterate its unwavering support for the universalization and early entry into force of the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty (CTBT). In that regard, we call upon those States that have not yet signed or ratified the CTBT to do so as a matter of urgency. It is to be recalled that Africa became a nuclear-weapon-free zone in July 2009, when the Treaty of Pelindaba entered into force. The African Nuclear-Weapon-Free Zone Treaty seeks to ensure that nuclear weapons are not developed, produced, stockpiled, tested, acquired or stationed in Africa, including on its island States. The Treaty prohibits research on the development of nuclear weapons, the dumping of radioactive waste and armed attacks on peaceful nuclear installations in the African zone by Treaty parties. As a matter of right and as provided for in the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons, however, the Treaty of Pelindaba supports the use of nuclear energy and nuclear science and technology for peaceful purposes.

With regard to the establishment of nuclear-weapon-free zones, we believe that they can make significant contributions not only to achieving regional and international security but also to strengthening progress towards total nuclear disarmament. In that connection, the African Nuclear-Weapon-Free Zone Treaty remains a fundamental legal basis for creating a zone of peace and cooperation on the continent and helps to serve as an effective confidence-building measure for nuclear non-proliferation and disarmament efforts at the global level. In that regard, Ethiopia continues to support the establishment of nuclear-weapon-free zones in other parts of the world, including the Middle East.

Ethiopia continues to attach great importance to disarmament and the non-proliferation of weapons of mass destruction. That is why we remain committed

to the goal of a nuclear-weapon-free world. It is the responsibility of all peace-loving nations to ensure that the danger that such weapons pose to humankind is eliminated from the face of the Earth. However, the threat of nuclear weapons is growing greater today than ever before, given the possibility that they might end up in the wrong hands. Therefore, the need to take concrete action to conclude a legally binding and effective treaty to curtail the illicit trade and transfer of such weapons, in particular to non-State actors, is an existential necessity.

The Government of Ethiopia is committed to ensuring that the rules governing radiation protection and nuclear regulatory control are followed in pursuance of the applicable domestic and international laws, including the International Atomic Energy Agency's safety standards. My delegation would like to stress that the total elimination of nuclear weapons remains the only absolute guarantee against the use or threat of use of nuclear weapons, and further reiterates its call for effective assurances to all non-nuclear-weapon States against the use or threat of use of nuclear weapons by nuclear-weapon States.

Since the conclusion of the negotiations on the CTBT, in August 1996, the Conference on Disarmament has remained deadlocked, with no solution in sight. With the exception of 1998 and 2009, the Conference has not been able to reach consensus on a programme of work, and has therefore been unable to commence substantive deliberations on all aspects of disarmament issues. The major difficulties remaining to be addressed include the disagreement among key players on the prioritization of main issues on the Conference on Disarmament's agenda and the attempts by some countries to link progress in one area to parallel progress in other areas. We strongly believe that Conference on Disarmament, as the sole multilateral negotiating forum, has a crucial role to play in addressing problems associated with the proliferation of nuclear arms and in finding solutions through the adoption of global treaties. Its revitalization is therefore more urgent than ever before.

The establishment of nuclear-free zones in various parts of the world, confidence-building measures, the strict implementation of all treaties in the area of disarmament and arms control and mutual assistance in the process of disarmament are also important in helping to bring about a much safer world that is free from all forms of weapons of mass destruction. In that regard, my delegation would like to call on all concerned States



to demonstrate in concrete terms the necessary political will by fulfilling their commitments towards putting an end to these weapons, including conventional arms, to achieve the desired goal of complete disarmament.

Making progress in all of those crucial areas of disarmament would no doubt be facilitated by enhanced confidence among States and scrupulous adherence to the principles of international law and to the principles of friendly relations among States.

In conclusion, I would like to reiterate that Ethiopia, for its part, remains committed to continuing to participate fully and constructively with regard to all issues of disarmament to realize a better, more secure and more peaceful world.

*The Chair returned to the chair.*

**Mr. Rachmianto** (Indonesia): Let me first congratulate you, Mr. Chair, and the other members of the Bureau on your election to guide the Committee. We are confident that under your able stewardship the Committee will be enabled to carry out its work with positive outcomes.

Indonesia associates itself with the statement delivered on behalf of the Movement of Non-Aligned Countries (NAM) (see A/C.1/68/PV.3) and the statement by the representative of Myanmar on behalf of the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (see A/C.1/68/PV.5).

On 26 September, we saw an unprecedented gathering of world leaders, Government officials and civil society representatives at United Nations Headquarters, where they reinvigorated their resolve to rid the world of nuclear weapons. That, the first-ever General Assembly High-level Meeting on Nuclear Disarmament (see A/68/PV.11), displayed the keen and clear demand of the international community to eliminate nuclear weapons and realize enduring peace and security for everyone. The First Committee and other parts of the United Nations disarmament machinery now need to intensify their work so that the momentum generated at the High-level Meeting is sustained and the heightened focus on disarmament is translated into tangible results.

Results will not occur overnight. We hope that all States will demonstrate greater political will to realize their undertakings on nuclear disarmament and non-proliferation and simultaneously pursue

all other First Committee agenda items with strong determination.

While Indonesia is cognizant of the differences on how to achieve nuclear disarmament, it is convinced that by continuing dialogue, building mutual confidence and taking steps to implement established commitments, we can all play our role in ensuring greater convergence and advancement in the processes of the disarmament machinery. We must therefore help unlock the stalemate in the Conference on Disarmament and enable it to achieve a balanced programme of work. A fourth special session of the General Assembly devoted to disarmament could also contribute to progress in the disarmament machinery, and we therefore urge that it be convened at an early date.

In the absence of a comprehensive and non-discriminatory nuclear-weapons convention, the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT) remains the foundation of the nuclear non-proliferation and disarmament regime. But the Action Plan of the 2010 NPT Review Conference should be fully implemented and all three NPT pillars be strengthened. That also means that a key agreement — convening a conference on the establishment of a zone free from nuclear and other weapons of mass destruction in the Middle East, which was to happen in 2012 — must be implemented immediately. Delay in that necessary conference risks harming not only the peace process in the Middle East but the very credibility of the NPT and the effectiveness of its review process.

We must not only echo the fear of nuclear weapons; we must also show through our actions that we mean to realize the vision of a nuclear-weapon-free world. For its part, Indonesia wilfully forwent the acquisition of nuclear weapons many years ago and placed its nuclear facilities and activities under the safeguards of the International Atomic Energy Agency. Moreover, we continue to take steps to strengthen our national framework on nuclear security.

Indonesia ratified the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty (CTBT) last year. Together with Hungary, Indonesia acted as co-president of the Article XIV Conference held at the United Nations on 27 September. We continue to call on the remaining annex 2 countries to demonstrate their political commitment by signing or ratifying the CTBT so that it can enter into force without delay.

In supporting nuclear-weapon-free zones in the world, we intend to preserve South-East Asia as a nuclear-weapon-free zone that is also free of all weapons of mass destruction (WMDs). Indonesia therefore calls on nuclear-weapon States to sign and ratify the Protocol to the Treaty on the Southeast Asia Nuclear Weapon-Free Zone as soon as possible.

Indonesia fully stands behind the call to achieve a nuclear-weapons convention, to designate 26 September as the international day for the total elimination of nuclear weapons, and to convene an international conference no later than 2018 to review progress on nuclear disarmament. Those three main points were stressed by the Non-Aligned Movement at the recent high-level meeting, and they feature in the draft resolution to be presented soon on behalf of NAM as a follow-up to that meeting.

At the same time, pending complete nuclear disarmament, Indonesia also supports the conclusion of a universal, unconditional and legally binding instrument on security assurances to all non-nuclear-weapon States. We also support working towards a fissile material treaty banning all pre-existing stocks as well as the future production of fissile material for nuclear weapons or other nuclear explosive devices. At the same time, we will continue to support progress on the prevention of an arms race in outer space, as another important item before the Conference on Disarmament.

It is vital that we achieve progress on other WMDs as well. Since its entry into force, the Chemical Weapons Convention (CWC) has historically contributed to a steady and universal progress in the destruction of declared stockpiles of chemical weapons. We welcome Syria's decision to accede to the Convention and look forward to the result of the ongoing verification and destruction of its stockpile, in collaboration with the Organization for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons (OPCW). In that context, Indonesia commends the recent awarding of the Nobel Peace Prize to the OPCW. As a State party to the CWC, Indonesia strongly encourages those State parties that have not met the extended deadline for destroying their remaining stockpiles to do so without further delay.

With regard to the illegal supply and illegitimate use of conventional weapons by unauthorized actors, Indonesia is deeply concerned by the immense loss of life and property that this menace causes in many parts of the world. We should redouble our efforts to

tackle the illicit trade in and use of small arms and light weapons, including by enhancing cooperation and assistance to developing countries that require it and by strengthening the United Nations Programme of Action on Small Arms and Light Weapons.

Indonesia notes the conclusion of the Arms Trade Treaty earlier this year and maintains that the Treaty must fully take into account the legitimate interests of arms importing and exporting States equally and that its use must be transparent, non-discriminatory, balanced and not for the pursuit of particular political agendas of exporting States.

In conclusion, we underline the need to step up political will, cooperation and collaboration among all countries to attain concrete and positive outcomes in the First Committee. Let us work together resolutely to help build a safe and peaceful world for all humankind.

**Mr. Jiménez** (Nicaragua) (*spoke in Spanish*): The delegation of Nicaragua is pleased to congratulate you, Sir, on your election, and we wish you the greatest of success in your duties. We also congratulate the other members of the Bureau upon their election.

My delegation associates itself with the statements delivered by the representative of Indonesia on behalf of the Movement of Non-Aligned Countries (NAM) (see A/C.1/68/PV.3) and wishes to add the following remarks in its national capacity.

Promoting peace and maintaining international security are fundamental components of the foreign policy of the Government of Reconciliation and National Unity, led by our President, Comandante Daniel Ortega Saavedra, which aims to promote human development, which we view as sustainable development. In addition, at the national and Central American levels, we have developed a policy of citizen security and against drug trafficking and transnational organized crime, which are crimes that undermine stability and corrupt the foundations of our society.

Nicaragua has expressed before the international community the importance of continuing to move towards the goal of general and complete disarmament, including not only nuclear weapons but also other conventional weapons of mass destruction, the use of which violates the fundamental principles of general international law and international humanitarian law. In that regard, we reiterate what was put forth in the declaration of the Community of Latin American and

Caribbean States on nuclear disarmament in August, and the joint statement on the humanitarian impact of nuclear weapons delivered in April by a group of countries during the second session of the Preparatory Committee for the 2015 Review Conference of the Parties to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons. My delegation also participated actively in the debate on the humanitarian impact of nuclear weapons held in Oslo, and encourages the participation of countries with nuclear weapons to participate in the conference that will be held in Mexico next year.

Nicaragua welcomes the historic General Assembly High-level Meeting on Nuclear Disarmament (see A/68/PV.11), held on 26 September, and supports the designation of 26 September every year as the international day to renew our resolve to completely eliminate nuclear weapons. We join the calls for a high-level international conference on nuclear disarmament to be convened in five years to review the progress achieved.

In the field of nuclear disarmament and the non-proliferation of nuclear weapons, Nicaragua is a State party to the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty and the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons. Additionally, our country is part of the first regional initiative that declares its densely populated area as a zone free of weapons, through the Treaty for the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons in Latin America and the Caribbean, known as the Treaty of Tlatelolco.

In that regard, Nicaragua has supported the approval, review and consideration of the resolutions and declarations on that subject in order to make progress in curbing the arms race and in the search for measures that will lead to the complete elimination of nuclear weapons under a system of transparent and effective international control, reiterating that the definitive and immediate termination of all nuclear-weapon tests is the most effective measure of nuclear disarmament and non-proliferation. The dire consequences, for human beings and for the environment, of the more than 2,000 nuclear tests conducted since 1945 continue to be suffered in many parts of the world and must be brought to an end.

Nicaragua respects the inalienable right of all States to the peaceful use of nuclear energy without any discrimination. We stress the importance of the International Atomic Energy Agency's increasing nuclear safety and radiation protection, strengthening

the international nuclear safety standards, preparedness and emergency response and, above all, radiation protection for people and the environment, providing appropriate responses based on scientific knowledge and complete transparency, in the event of another nuclear accident.

We reaffirm our hope that a universal and unconditional legally binding instrument on security assurances to all non-nuclear-weapon States will be negotiated and concluded in order to achieve the complete elimination of those weapons, regardless of their type or geographic location.

Nicaragua firmly believes that the non-proliferation regime and peace and international security can be strengthened by establishing nuclear-weapon-free zones, which are a significant contribution to achieving nuclear disarmament. In that connection, our country regrets the failure to fulfil the agreement on convening in 2012 the international conference for the establishment in the Middle East of a zone free of nuclear weapons and other weapons of mass destruction. We reaffirm that the holding of that conference is an important and integral part of the outcome of the 2010 Review Conference of the Parties to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons. We therefore urge the parties to convene the conference as soon as possible.

Nicaragua, as a State party to the Chemical Weapons Convention, rejects the use of those weapons under any circumstances, regardless of who uses them.

We want to recognize the political will demonstrated by the decision of the Government of the Syrian Arab Republic to accede to the Chemical Weapons Convention and by its cooperation with the Organization for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons. We hope that that not only fosters a zone free of chemical weapons and its universalization, but also that the other parties to the Syrian conflict and their foreign allies respect the Convention and stop supplying chemical weapons to the other party and that they give up the arsenals that they have.

Although the General Assembly adopted the first Arms Trade Treaty on 2 April, Nicaragua abstained in the voting because it believes that, among other things, the final text of the Treaty leaves many gaps in terms of arms transfers and leads to many ambiguities because of vague terminology, which could be easily manipulated to affect the national security interests of another State party. Nonetheless, the Government of

the Republic of Nicaragua will continue to study and analyse the Treaty.

My country is committed to, and has already taken the corresponding measures for, preventing, combating and eradicating the illegal arms trade. Aware of its peace commitments to its people and its commitments to combat and prevent the illegal arms trade, Nicaragua incorporated into its national legislation the Programme of Action and the International Tracing Instrument through the Special Act for the Control and Regulation of Firearms, Ammunition, Explosives and Other Related Materials — Act 510. In that manner, it ushered in a new phase that includes a rigorous and unremitting plan to control and register firearms in civilian hands and to confiscate weapons of war.

Nicaragua signed, ratified and deposited its instrument of ratification of the Convention on Cluster Munitions, an international legal instrument banning the use, production, stockpiling and transfer of those weapons, which affect civilian populations and individuals, causing suffering and death, including among women and children.

Nicaragua has made an additional contribution to promoting peace and international security in the framework of the Central American Integration System. My country is a State party to the Framework Treaty on Democratic Security in Central America and many other regional legal instruments that underpin our commitment to peace. It was also a point of pride for our country to participate in the global leadership of the fight against anti-personnel mines, having succeeded in implementing the national demining programme in 2010, and to declare Nicaragua — and with it all of Central America — the world's first mine-free subregion.

**Mr. Barriga** (Liechtenstein): At the outset, Mr. Chair, we want to say how delighted we are to see you chairing this Committee. We also want to congratulate the other members of the Bureau on their election. We look forward to working with you during this session.

The main goal for disarmament is the prevention of armed conflict and the human suffering caused by it, while guarding international stability. In pursuing that goal, we must strike a balance between visionary aims and feasible measures. We furthermore believe that initiatives in that context should take due account of applicable human rights law and international

humanitarian law in order to maximize their legitimacy and implementation by all actors. The Arms Trade Treaty (ATT) was a very positive example in that regard.

The recent General Assembly High-level Meeting on Nuclear Disarmament (see A/68/PV.11) highlighted the need to make progress on that important agenda, which is an integral part of the overall architecture reflected in the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT). But much more needs to be done to achieve the long-term goal of a world free of nuclear weapons, and indeed free of all weapons of mass destruction. It is essential that we achieve the universality of the NPT without delay.

The Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty is a key instrument for advancing non-proliferation and nuclear disarmament. We therefore encourage all Member States, especially those listed in annex 2 of the Treaty, to ratify it. We warmly welcome the decision of Indonesia, as an annex 2 State, to do so. In addition, we would like to underline the obligation of nuclear-weapon States to consider the legitimate interests of non-nuclear-weapon States in further reducing the operational status of nuclear-weapon systems.

We welcome the fact that the Security Council has responded to the use of chemical weapons in Syria and decided to destroy all chemical weapons in the country. Those developments have illustrated the importance of the prohibition of the use of chemical weapons, as well as the crucial role of the Organization for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons. We hope that that will create a new momentum for the universal ratification of the Chemical Weapons Convention.

The recent focus on weapons of mass destruction, however, must not overshadow the fact that conventional weapons, in particular small arms and light weapons, cause the vast majority of casualties in armed conflict, especially among civilians. We welcome the adoption of a resolution on small arms and light weapons by the Security Council a couple of weeks ago.

The most important development in that area by far, however, was the adoption of the ATT earlier this year — the greatest achievement in international law in the recent past. The ATT will fill an important gap in curbing the proliferation of weapons. We have seen time and time again how illegally traded arms can intensify a conflict and cause widespread suffering among civilian populations. Liechtenstein signed the ATT on the first day and welcomes the strong positive



response it has received from Member States since its adoption. We commend those States that have already ratified the Treaty and are thereby contributing to its early entry into force.

Earlier this year, Liechtenstein ratified the Convention on Cluster Munitions. Our domestic legislation goes beyond what is required by the Convention and also prohibits the funding of cluster munitions, both directly and indirectly. A similar prohibition on the funding of nuclear, biological and chemical weapons is already in place, as is a prohibition on the funding of anti-personnel mines. Furthermore, Liechtenstein's Parliament recently approved the ratification of the Protocol against the Illicit Manufacturing of and Trafficking in Firearms, Their Parts and Components and Ammunition, supplementing the United Nations Convention against Transnational Organized Crime; the instrument will soon be deposited.

Finally, we would like to draw attention to the heavy burden that the various disarmament resolutions place on States that wish to report and submit their views to the Secretary-General. We encourage the Secretariat to develop a consolidated reporting tool to make it easier, especially for small States, to comply adequately and in due time.

**Ms. Kasese-Bota (Zambia):** Let me begin by congratulating you, Mr. Chair, and the entire membership of the Bureau on your election to lead the First Committee. I assure you, Sir, of my delegation's full support and cooperation as we execute the important obligations of the Committee.

The Zambian delegation aligns itself with the statements made by the representatives of Indonesia and Nigeria, who spoke on behalf of the Non-Aligned Movement and the African Group, respectively (see A/C.1/68/PV.3).

Zambia remains fully committed to the notion of general and complete disarmament and reaffirms its support for a world free of nuclear weapons. As a State party to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT) and the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty (CTBT), Zambia is committed to the universalization of those Treaties and pledges to continue supporting regional and global efforts in the field of nuclear disarmament and non-proliferation.

My delegation acknowledges the contribution that the five regional nuclear-weapon-free zones continue

to make to the strengthening of our global nuclear disarmament and non-proliferation norms and the consolidation of the efforts for peace and security. Zambia is particularly proud and encouraged by the fact that all African States are parties to the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty and have agreed to declare the continent a nuclear-weapon-free zone through the Treaty of Pelindaba. We call upon regions that do not have nuclear-weapon-free zones to work towards that end.

Zambia remains concerned, however, about the large number of nuclear weapons that remain on high alert in the world today and the devastating effects that a nuclear catastrophe could have on human life and the environment. It is clear from the Oslo Conference on the humanitarian consequences of a detonation of a nuclear weapon, held in March 2013, as well as from the second session of the Preparatory Committee for the 2015 NPT Review Conference, held in Geneva in April, that the continued possession of nuclear weapons is threat to human security. The only preventive action is therefore to ban and eliminate nuclear weapons once and for all. Accordingly, Zambia welcomes the initiative of Mexico to hold a follow-up meeting on that important theme in February 2014.

Zambia is furthermore concerned about the lack of progress in the negotiations on any of the issues on the agenda of the Conference on Disarmament (CD). We nevertheless welcome the decision by the CD to establish an informal working group with the mandate of producing a programme of work. Zambia is convinced that a functional CD is key for the international community to address international security and disarmament-related challenges in an effective manner. We also note the failure by the United Nations Disarmament Commission, the sole specialized deliberative body within the United Nations disarmament machinery, to adopt recommendations and submit them to the General Assembly. The need to find an amicable solution to the stalemate in the disarmament machinery can never be overemphasized.

The absence of an internationally binding instrument that guarantees unconditional and legally binding security assurances to non-nuclear-weapon States against a nuclear attack or use of threats by a nuclear-weapon State remains of concern to Zambia. Our concern is all the greater in the light of the current environment, which is characterized by Member States' non-compliance with either their NPT or

CTBT obligations. My delegation therefore supports international efforts towards negotiations for a legally binding instrument on negative security assurances pending the total elimination of nuclear weapons.

Allow me to highlight the fact that Zambia recently successfully hosted the fourth Meeting of States Parties to the Convention on Cluster Munitions (CCM). That was the first time that the Meeting of States Parties was held on African soil. Although Zambia does not produce, stockpile or use cluster munitions, it took on the hosting task as a demonstration of its commitment to the alleviation of human suffering and environmental degradation that cluster munitions cause. Under the theme “Universalization”, Zambia joins in urging all States that have yet to ratify or accede to the CCM to do so. The fourth Meeting of States Parties highlighted the broad rejection of cluster weapons by the majority of States. It also showcased the powerful norm against the use of cluster munitions that the Convention is creating, thanks to the expressions of concern at the ongoing use of cluster munitions in some parts of the world voiced by 48 States at the Meeting.

The Convention is already having a clear impact, with stockpile destruction having the greatest success to date. We congratulate States for their enthusiastic response to this central Convention obligation. The four Meetings of States Parties have emphasized that clearance of land contaminated by cluster munitions is possible and can be done very efficiently when suitable methodologies are applied.

Zambia takes this opportunity to congratulate the Security Council on its bold step in examining the issues of small arms and light weapons and adopting resolution 2117 (2013) on the matter at its meeting held on 26 September (see S/PV.7036). The resolution places phenomenal emphasis on the need for the full and effective implementation of the United Nations Programme of Action to Prevent, Combat and Eradicate the Illicit Trade in Small Arms and Light Weapons in All Its Aspects and in the International Instrument to Enable States to Identify and Trace, in a Timely and Reliable Manner, Illicit Small Arms and Light Weapons.

My delegation calls for the setting up of a multilateral funding mechanism to help speed up work on that front. In the existing mechanism under international cooperation and assistance, matching needs with resources has not proved to be very effective in moving the Programme of Action agenda forward.

In partnership with like-minded Member States, Zambia worked tirelessly to successfully conclude the negotiations that led to the adoption of the Arms Trade Treaty, which today has more than 100 signatory States. The Treaty gives strong impetus to stemming the illicit trade in small arms. Zambia would like to encourage States that have not yet signed the Treaty to do so. I am happy to indicate that Zambia has set in motion the process to ratify the Treaty as soon as possible.

Allow me to end my statement by restating that Zambia believes in the common vision of a world free from the menace of repugnant weapons.

*The meeting rose at 1 p.m.*