



General Assembly

Sixty-second session

First Committee

2nd meeting

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Official Records

Chairperson: Mr. Badji (Senegal)

The meeting was called to order at 10.25 a.m.

Introductory statements

The Chairperson (*spoke in French*): This morning, in accordance with its programme of work and timetable, the First Committee will begin its general debate on all disarmament and related international security agenda items. Before we proceed with our work, I should like to make a brief introductory statement.

First, I sincerely thank everyone for the confidence shown in me by my election to chair the Committee at this sixty-second session. Above all, it is an honour to my country, Senegal. In taking up this lofty mission and daunting responsibility, I am inspired by the deep dedication of the people and Government of Senegal to the maintenance of international peace and security. I also rely on the active support and effective cooperation of all delegations and of a secretariat from whose readiness to serve, expertise and professionalism I have already benefited.

The other members of the Bureau — the Vice-Chairmen, Mr. Ricardo Morote of Peru, Mr. Roman Hunger of Switzerland and Mr. Bassam Darwish of the Syrian Arab Republic; and the Rapporteur, Mr. Dainius Baublys of Lithuania — join me in this expression of gratitude.

As we are all aware, the global disarmament and non-proliferation regime has for a number of years encountered many obstacles, considerably limiting the progress we have a right to expect. These obstacles,

which fortunately are not insurmountable, are largely due to the complexity of those issues that challenge us all. This complexity means that it has not been possible to move forward in the negotiation and conclusion of new treaties — for example, on nuclear weapons, weapons in outer space, and fissile materials.

Moreover, at a time when the international community is attempting to mobilize the financial resources required to implement the Millennium Development Goals we see a growing rise in military expenditure, which exceeded \$1.2 trillion in 2006. Yet, despite this rise in military expenditure, insecurity persists and spreads in many regions.

In addition, the lack of a consensus plan to achieve nuclear disarmament still further highlights threats of proliferation and the development of the phenomenon of terrorism on the global level.

However, alongside the points of concern that I have underscored, and which may indeed prove difficult to resolve, several significant advances provide grounds for hope of a safer future. The conviction that only multilateral cooperation can enable us to achieve our objectives is increasingly shared. In addition, though nuclear weapons remain at a very high level, reports by experts indicate a certain decline in such weapons, and there are increasing calls for their complete elimination.

Similarly, global norms for the mastery and control of the expansion of chemical and biological weapons have been strengthened year after year. States throughout the world are continuing efforts to exert

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strict control to prevent proliferation and to ensure that weapons of mass destruction do not fall into the hands of terrorists. In addition, the moratorium on nuclear tests continues to be maintained.

Finally, it should be strongly emphasized that resolution 61/89, "Towards an arms trade treaty: establishing common international standards for the import, export and transfer of conventional arms", adopted by the General Assembly last year to lay the foundations for a treaty on the arms trade, marks an important step towards the establishment of international norms for conventional weapons.

In the light of this progress, I should like to call for a continuation of our shared efforts to make the First Committee a forum serving as a driving force which, through the far-sightedness of its members, will continue to guide the action of the international community on the sensitive issues that are brought before it.

We shall be debating sensitive and highly complex issues within the framework of the thematic debate planned for the weeks to come. As shown in document A/C.1/62/CRP.2, there are plans for several exchanges of views, communications and panels on subjects such as nuclear disarmament, the Convention on Chemical Weapons (CCW), the outer-space Treaty, the illicit trade in small arms and light weapons, the Convention on the prohibition of mines, verification, regional disarmament and security, the United Nations Regional Centres for Peace and Disarmament, the United Nations disarmament mechanism and so on.

Member States can ensure a fruitful discussion and a good exchange of points of view, with all sides being heard, so as to progress towards specific results, if they demonstrate a sense of compromise while bearing in mind all our shared objectives. Civil society and non-governmental organizations all have their role to play in this difficult but essential exercise.

I shall spare no effort to facilitate this exercise. I know that I can count on the support of the Bureau and all delegations to ensure a successful outcome to our session to the satisfaction of all member States and those who have the right to expect from us promising results for our shared future.

It is now my great pleasure to warmly welcome Mr. Sergio Duarte, the recently appointed High Representative for Disarmament Affairs. He is

participating in the Committee's work for the first time in that capacity, but I know that he is very familiar with the Committee and that throughout his outstanding career in the diplomacy of his great country he has had the opportunity to deal with the issues now before it. His expertise in disarmament and international security is well known and highly appreciated, and therefore everyone eagerly awaits his statement.

Mr. Duarte, High Representative for Disarmament Affairs: I am grateful for this opportunity to address the Committee, and I am pleased to congratulate you, Mr. Chairman, on your appointment to guide our work. I also wish to recognize the other members of the Bureau and to assure you of the fullest cooperation of the Office for Disarmament Affairs in the work ahead.

I know that Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon closely follows the work of this Committee, and he has stated his deep personal interest in revitalizing multilateral efforts in disarmament, non-proliferation and the regulation of armaments, as well as the United Nations own effectiveness in this area. If we can continue the spirit of good will and cooperation that I sense in this room today I am optimistic that our session this year will indeed be productive.

Upon his election as President of the General Assembly at its first session, in January 1946, Paul-Henri Spaak called upon all delegations to remember, when advancing their own particular national interests, that those interests must take their place in the wider setting of the general interest. His advice remains sound, especially as we examine our challenging agenda today. To succeed, we must reaffirm our common purpose in strengthening international peace and security for present and future generations. We must ensure that our architecture rests on a solid foundation of multilateral cooperation and respect for treaty commitments.

As in the past, many of the world's deepest insecurities arise from threats posed by weapons of mass destruction. This is not surprising, since the very existence of nuclear, biological and chemical arms entails threats or risks of use. We have seen some progress in recent years in building global norms against the proliferation and terrorist use of all such weapons. We must all work to strengthen existing instruments and to promote the rule of law in these fields.

Yet, when it comes to nuclear disarmament, which Dag Hammarskjöld once called a “hardy perennial” at the United Nations, progress has been slow and subject to setbacks. It is a harsh reality that today over half of humanity lives in countries that possess nuclear weapons, and it is a harsher reality that humanity as a whole continues to live in insecurity as a result.

Some 26,000 nuclear weapons reportedly continue to exist, although, because of limits on transparency, we do not know the precise number. Whether this estimate is too low or too high, the result suggests the great distance that remains to be travelled on the road to nuclear disarmament.

Step by step the world must continue its historic journey to achieve this goal. Last month signatories to the Comprehensive Test-Ban Treaty (CTBT) adopted the Final Document after their article XIV meeting, reaffirming the goal of bringing the Treaty into force as soon as possible. As stressed by Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon and his predecessor, Kofi Annan, and by many delegations and non-governmental groups, both nuclear disarmament and non-proliferation are vital to international peace and security. They are mutually reinforcing and even help to reduce the risks of nuclear terrorism — for example, by strengthening controls over weapon-usable fissile materials.

Intensive efforts are under way today to resolve peacefully international concerns over nuclear activities in Iran and in the Democratic People’s Republic of Korea.

This year the Preparatory Committee for the 2010 Review Conference of the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT) had a modestly successful first session.

Consistent with their obligations under Security Council resolution 1540 (2004), States are improving their ability to prevent the acquisition of weapons of mass destruction by non-State actors and additional States. Fortunately, the overwhelming majority of States continue to seek the complete elimination of such weapons.

The disarmament and non-proliferation norms, in short, are stronger than is often implied in newspaper headlines that ignore the faithful compliance by the vast majority.

The manufacture and proliferation of delivery systems, however, remain difficult problems, and there is no multilateral missiles treaty or even signs of one arising any time soon. Last June the third Panel of Governmental Experts on missiles commenced its work, and I look forward to a successful outcome of the Panel’s work in June 2008.

The world has achieved much in establishing a fully global norm against biological and chemical arms, as perhaps best seen in the absence of States’ heralding such weapons as vital to their security interests. We witnessed a successful Sixth Review Conference of the States Parties to the Convention on the Prohibition of the Development, Production and Stockpiling of Bacteriological (Biological) and Toxin Weapons and on Their Destruction last December, the first meeting this year in the Treaty’s new review cycle, and the establishment of the Implementation Support Unit operating out of the Geneva branch of the Office for Disarmament Affairs.

Parties to the Chemical Weapons Convention (CWC) marked the Treaty’s tenth anniversary in many arenas around the world. Meanwhile, its adherents have grown to 182 States parties. The great tasks ahead include the achievement of universal adherence and compliance with the destruction deadlines.

While the United Nations has been working for over six decades to eliminate all weapons of mass destruction, it has been working almost as long in limiting and regulating the various types of conventional arms. I note in this respect that Article 11 of the Charter itself provides, in paragraph 1, a mandate for the General Assembly to consider “the principles governing disarmament and the regulation of armaments”. Appropriately, these are undertaken in parallel, not in any arranged sequence; as we tackle new challenges, the old ones must not be neglected.

Last year the General Assembly adopted resolution 61/89, which requested the Secretary-General to seek the views of Member States on the feasibility, scope and draft parameters for the establishment of a comprehensive, legally binding instrument establishing common standards for the international trade in conventional arms, and to submit these views in a report to the General Assembly at its sixty-second session.

The Office for Disarmament Affairs has received an unprecedented 97 submissions. This large response

has led to delays in processing the report, in light of the General Assembly's persistent efforts to rationalize its work by reducing the heavy volume of documentation and ensuring maximum brevity.

Because Member States have indicated that it is essential for their views to be included in their entirety in the report, the secretariat has had to publish it in two parts, the first of which has already been published; it includes those submissions that met the requirements on length. The second part will be published on 17 October, at the beginning of the thematic debate. These reports, as received and as permitted by Member States, are also accessible on the website of the Office for Disarmament Affairs.

The high number of submissions clearly shows the depth of interest among Member States in pursuing such a treaty, as does the large number of States that have expressed interest in being included in the group of governmental experts to be established by the Secretary-General to assist him in drafting the report on the subject, as requested by the General Assembly. While it is not possible to include every interested Member State in this group, each delegation will have its own important contributions to make in considering the proposal.

Here is an initiative that has also earned the active interest and support of groups throughout civil society, which also deserve credit for their efforts to eliminate landmines, cluster munitions and inhumane weapons.

In this respect, I wish to note that the States parties to the Convention on Certain Conventional Weapons (CCW) will consider the issue of cluster munitions at their meeting in November, and the world community is looking forward to a positive outcome.

It should also be noted that the States parties celebrated the tenth anniversary of the mine-ban Convention this year, and that they will hold their eighth meeting next month in Jordan.

With respect to the illicit trade in small arms and light weapons, the report of the Group of Governmental Experts on illicit brokering, chaired by Mr. Daniël Prins of the Netherlands, contains several recommendations that I hope the First Committee will endorse.

I should also like to note the efforts known as the "Geneva Process" to promote the monitoring and

implementation of the 2001 Programme of Action. Involving both governmental and non-governmental participants, this initiative has helped to place small arms issues on the list of United Nations priorities. The Security Council's statement of 29 June this year on small arms also underscored the importance of this goal.

The United Nations Register of Conventional Arms serves to improve the transparency of national data on imports, exports and the production of seven categories of major conventional arms. I hope the First Committee will acknowledge its importance and call upon States to contribute their own data to this useful database.

The Standardized Instrument for Reporting Military Expenditures is another initiative promoted by the Office for Disarmament Affairs. The use of this instrument by all States is a worthy goal meriting the support of the Committee.

Some disarmament-related work at the United Nations, such as verification, applies to diverse types of weapons. I am pleased that the Panel of Government Experts on Verification in All Its Aspects was able to reach agreement on a report this year with 21 recommendations, and I commend the Panel's Chairman, Mr. John Barrett of Canada, for producing this useful report.

The Open-ended Working Group on convening a fourth special session of the General Assembly devoted to disarmament also had a productive year, concluding three one-week sessions that shed light on the depth of support for this initiative among Member States, while also identifying specific issues that will need further deliberation. I wish to thank Ambassador Alfredo Labbé of Chile for his competent chairmanship of this group.

Within the United Nations disarmament machinery, the Conference on Disarmament remains the world's single multilateral negotiating forum for disarmament. While it has once again been unable to agree on a substantive programme of work, many participants and outside observers noticed that it conducted its deliberations in a generally positive atmosphere, demonstrating strong support for the commencement of negotiations on a fissile material treaty.

I salute the important efforts by the six Presidents of the Conference on Disarmament this year for their efforts to fulfil its historic negotiating mandate. The next P6 will certainly have fertile ground on which to work at the start of next year's session.

Another part of this machinery, the Secretary-General's Advisory Board on Disarmament Matters, concluded its 2007 session with a report on emerging weapons technologies, including outer-space aspects. The report drew specific attention to the dangers associated with rapid advancements in the field of biotechnology as well as the growing risks to the peaceful uses of outer space. The latter was especially timely, given that 2007 marks the fortieth anniversary of the outer-space Treaty and the fiftieth anniversary of the launching of Sputnik.

The Board's report this year encouraged the Secretary-General to continue his efforts to raise public awareness of disarmament and non-proliferation issues, including through initiatives in the field of education. On this issue, I am pleased to announce that the Office for Disarmament Affairs will soon be launching a disarmament and non-proliferation education portal on the United Nations award-winning Cyberschoolbus — an educational website to help young people and their teachers to understand global issues. The launch will take place on 15 October, and I invite all interested delegations to attend.

I believe the new United Nations Disarmament Yearbook will also prove to be a useful research and educational resource, both inside and outside the Organization.

Meanwhile, the United Nations Programme of Fellowships on Disarmament continues to receive acclaim. We have now trained more than 700 young officials in this field from countries throughout the world, in literally all inhabited regions. I am very pleased to see several of these alumni here this morning.

Although the Committee addresses global issues, over the years it has also recognized the crucial role that regional organizations and local initiatives can play in advancing global disarmament norms. Regional nuclear-weapon-free zones are only one case in point. Last year the world witnessed the establishment in Central Asia of the first such zone entirely north of the equator. Efforts must continue to encourage the nuclear-weapon States to adhere to the relevant

protocol, as well as the protocols to the treaties establishing other such zones.

The Office for Disarmament Affairs has helped to promote the implementation of Security Council resolution 1540 (2004) by advancing non-proliferation and counter-terrorism goals at the regional level through workshops and seminars in China, Ghana, Peru, Jamaica and, most recently, Jordan.

The Office also coordinates the work of the three United Nations Regional Centres for Peace and Disarmament: in Latin America and the Caribbean; Africa; and Asia and the Pacific. I am pleased to announce that, following the signature last July of our agreement with the Government of Nepal, we will be able to start operating the Asia-Pacific Centre from Kathmandu early next year. I have high regard for the dedicated professionals who work at these Centres, which, despite their frequent financial hardships, are able to produce concrete benefits for the regions concerned, local governments and indeed the citizens throughout these regions. The benefits include progress in curbing the illicit trafficking in small arms and light weapons. I thank all Member States that have supported the work of these Centres, both financially and politically, and call upon all other States to join in this support.

I wish now to express my deep gratitude for the support that Member States have given to the Office for Disarmament Affairs in its first year. As a result of the Secretary-General's initiative, this Office is part of the mainstream of the United Nations policy process and will continue to operate within the mandates of the former Department. I will do all that I can as High Representative for Disarmament Affairs to live up to the confidence that the General Assembly has voiced in this reform initiative, as expressed in its resolution 61/257.

No disarmament review would be complete without a tribute to the many contributions from individuals, groups and networks in civil society. Through their countless activities, they are constructing a solid political foundation for future progress in this field. These individuals and groups help both in mobilizing support throughout society for disarmament and in informing the deliberations going on throughout the United Nations disarmament machinery. We continue to count on their support and inspiration.

In closing, I express my best wishes for a productive session. This year, let us reaffirm our common purpose to work constructively for disarmament and arms limitation. Let us begin this task today.

The Chairperson (*spoke in French*): I thank the High Representative for his statement, which sets the tone for our negotiations and the commitment that creates a true working atmosphere for their commencement.

Agenda items 88 to 105

General debate on all disarmament and international security agenda items

The Chairperson (*spoke in French*): Before calling on the first speaker, I should like to remind delegations of the agreement to limit their statements to a maximum of 10 minutes for those speaking in their national capacity and to 15 minutes for those speaking on behalf of several delegations. I would ask delegations to assist us in complying with this rule so that they do not have to be reminded by the light in front of them.

Mr. Lithgow (Dominican Republic) (*spoke in Spanish*): I have the honour to make this statement on behalf of the members of the Rio Group: Argentina, Belize, Bolivia, Brazil, Chile, Colombia, Costa Rica, Ecuador, El Salvador, Guatemala, Guyana, Honduras, Mexico, Nicaragua, Panama, Paraguay, Peru, Uruguay, the Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela and my country, the Dominican Republic.

First, on behalf of the Rio Group, I congratulate you, Sir, on your election to preside over the work of the First Committee during this sixty-second session of the General Assembly. It is our hope that under your leadership our deliberations during the current session will be imbued with a sense of renewed purpose and resolve. We would also like to express our appreciation to the outgoing Chairperson, Ambassador Mona Juul of Norway, for the manner in which she conducted the work of the Committee.

The Rio Group welcomes the firm commitment by the Secretary-General to give greater impetus to the topics of disarmament.

We congratulate Ambassador Sergio Duarte on his appointment as the Secretary-General's High Representative for Disarmament Affairs.

The countries of the Rio Group have a long tradition of commitment to disarmament topics, which are among our priorities within the United Nations, because we recognize that disarmament is an essential component of efforts to maintain international peace and security. The Rio Group has been concerned that in recent years the disarmament machinery has made very little progress in some areas and has remained stagnant in others.

Faithful to its commitment to disarmament and non-proliferation, the Rio Group supported the convening this year of two important sessions: first, the Disarmament Commission, presided over by Ambassador Elbio Rosselli of Uruguay, and, secondly, the Open-ended Working Group to consider the objectives and agenda, including the possible establishment of the preparatory committee, for the fourth special session of the General Assembly devoted to disarmament (SSOD-IV), presided over by Ambassador Alfredo Labbé of Chile. The Rio Group would have wanted more substantive agreements, but it was possible to keep the channels of dialogue open. We trust that we shall be able to continue to make progress in subsequent sessions.

The Rio Group has shown a long and sustained commitment to the objectives of nuclear disarmament and non-proliferation. Our region, Latin America and the Caribbean, was the first densely populated nuclear-weapon-free zone established by the Treaty of Tlatelolco in 1967. As States parties to the Treaty, we urge nuclear-weapon States to withdraw the interpretative statements made at the time of their accession to its protocols.

The Rio Group also renews its commitment to support the establishment and extension of nuclear-weapon-free zones in other parts of the world. The Rio Group wishes to express its deep concern about the threat posed to humanity by the existence of nuclear weapons and doctrines of strategic defence that envisage the accumulation, development and use of these weapons. The Rio Group is committed to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT) and urges all States that have not yet done so to accede to it as non-nuclear-weapon States.

The three pillars of the NPT have equal importance, and unconditional progress should be made on all three, taking into account all the interests of the international community. Therefore, we should

not ignore the need to make progress on disarmament and implement the 13 practical steps agreed at the 2000 NPT Review Conference. In particular, we stress the need for nuclear-weapon States to fulfil their unambiguous commitment to the complete elimination of nuclear weapons.

The Rio Group notes with satisfaction that there has been progress in the preparations for the 2010 NPT Review Conference. We stress the importance of establishing subsidiary organs in the main committees of the Conference to consider the following, among other topics: practical measures to achieve the systematic and progressive elimination of nuclear weapons; and negative security assurances.

The Rio Group reaffirms that the total elimination of nuclear weapons is the only absolute guarantee against their use or the threat of their use, and that the non-nuclear-weapon States should receive effective guarantees from the nuclear-weapon States to that effect. Therefore, the Group calls for the conclusion at the earliest possible date of a universal, unconditional, legally binding agreement on negative security assurances for non-nuclear-weapon States.

The Rio Group encourages the negotiations on the denuclearization of the Korean Peninsula, which we hope will achieve the desired result. The Group welcomes the announcement by the Democratic People's Republic of Korea that it will dismantle its nuclear facilities and considers this to be an example of what can be achieved through dialogue and negotiation.

The Rio Group considers that all States parties should comply with every article of the NPT, without prejudice to their right to develop nuclear energy for peaceful purposes. In this context, the Group reaffirms the inalienable right of developing States to participate in research, production and use of nuclear energy for peaceful purposes, without discrimination. Our Group favours the broadest possible exchange of equipment, materials and scientific and technological information for the peaceful uses of nuclear energy.

The Group notes the proposal for civilian nuclear cooperation between a State party to the NPT and a non-party State. The proposal has raised numerous questions about its possible impact on the disarmament and non-proliferation regime, and on the NPT in particular. It is imperative to ensure that any decision

does not erode, but, rather, strengthens the disarmament and non-proliferation regime.

The Rio Group reiterates its support for negotiations, without preconditions, on an international treaty prohibiting the production of fissile material for nuclear weapons and other explosive devices, and including an international verification regime.

The Rio Group supports the speedy entry into force of the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty (CTBT), convinced that it would be accompanied by a limitation on the qualitative and quantitative development of nuclear weapons. The Group reiterates its appreciation to the Provisional Technical Secretariat for the work it has done to ensure the Treaty's prompt ratification, especially on the part of those countries that have difficulties in doing so, despite supporting its letter and spirit.

The total elimination of chemical and biological weapons should also be among the high disarmament priorities, since, like nuclear weapons, they are weapons of mass destruction. In this context, the Rio Group recalls that none of its members possess any of these weapons. The Group also considers that the universalization of the Chemical Weapons Convention (CWC) and the Biological Weapons Convention (BWC) is of the utmost importance. These instruments have broad international support.

In this regard, the Rio Group is pleased that on 27 September the High-level meeting on the Tenth Anniversary of the Entry into Force of the Chemical Weapons Convention was held and enjoyed the active participation of our Group. Likewise, we view in a positive light the fact that the Sixth Review Conference of the States Parties to the Biological Weapons Convention decided on an intersessional follow-up programme, which will include four annual meetings, prior to the Seventh Review Conference, to be held in 2011, and that it decided to establish in August this year an Implementation Support Unit of the Convention.

In addition to its concern about the proliferation of weapons of mass destruction, the Rio Group is worried about signs of an arms race in outer space, since no other field in international relations is characterized by such deep asymmetries of national capabilities, which are likely to increase in the coming years, with possible implications for our collective security. The Rio Group stresses the need for the

Conference on Disarmament to initiate its substantive work on the prevention of an arms race in outer space, and the utmost importance of the existing legal regime on the utilization of outer space being strictly respected, with recognition of the common interest of all humanity in the exploration and use of outer space for peaceful purposes.

The illicit trafficking in small arms and light weapons is a problem of particular gravity, requiring special attention from the international community because of the large numbers of deaths caused in our region and in other parts of the world. The Rio Group therefore reaffirms its full support for 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, believing that a collective effort is needed to combat this illicit activity.

In this connection, the Group encourages all initiatives to provide international cooperation and assistance in order to strengthen the full implementation of the Programme of Action, bearing in mind that each State bears the primary responsibility for the application of the relevant measures. The Rio Group is pleased that the next biennial meeting of States to consider the Programme's national, regional and global implementation will take place in 2008.

The Rio Group attaches importance to the subject of ammunition, because we believe that it is intrinsically linked to the problem of illicit trafficking of small arms and light weapons. The Rio Group also considers it important to discuss common international norms on the import, export and transfer of conventional arms, and hopes that the Group of Governmental Experts on the subject will take into account all the views expressed by States. Now that the work of the Group of Governmental Experts on the illicit brokering of small arms and light weapons has been concluded, the Group hopes that we can soon initiate negotiations on a legally binding treaty on the matter.

At the regional level the Rio Group has the legally binding Inter-American Convention Against the Illicit Manufacturing of and Trafficking in Firearms, Ammunition, Explosives, and Other Related Materials.

The Rio Group is concerned about the lack of political commitment by some States to prevent the proliferation of conventional weapons, including those that have excessively cruel and indiscriminate effects.

In this regard, we welcome the initiative by several countries to begin negotiations to regulate the use of cluster munitions. We hope that this will culminate in the adoption of a legally binding instrument strengthening the international humanitarian law regime.

We reiterate the importance of fully implementing all the provisions of the Convention on Prohibitions or Restrictions on the Use of Certain Conventional Weapons Which May Be Deemed to Be Excessively Injurious or to Have Indiscriminate Effects (CCW), and in particular its protocol V on explosive remnants of war. We call on all countries that have not yet done so to ratify the protocol.

The problems related to anti-personnel mines continue to require great attention from the international community. The Rio Group recognizes the value of the Ottawa Convention in combating this scourge, and calls for the convention to be made universal.

With the assistance of the United Nations Mine Action Service (UNMAS) and the demining programme of the Organization of American States (OAS), the countries of the Rio Group have committed themselves to making the hemisphere a zone free of anti-personnel mines. The Rio Group stresses the importance of cooperation in demining and in victim assistance. The Group hopes that the success seen in demining efforts in recent years can be repeated in years to come.

Confidence-building measures adopted voluntarily by States play an important role in the preservation of international peace and security, as they help enhance understanding. They help to prevent conflicts and to promote relations and cooperation between States.

Our region has given numerous examples of confidence-building measures at various levels. Those applied by members of the Rio Group include the Inter-American Convention on Transparency in Conventional Weapons Acquisitions, which is a legally binding instrument.

The Rio Group also believes that confidence-building measures should be promoted at the global level, taking into account the security needs of the countries and regions concerned. Consequently, the Group regards as very important such measures as the United Nations Register of Conventional Arms and the

United Nations system for the standardized reporting of military expenditures, among others.

The Rio Group is celebrating the twentieth anniversary of the establishment of the United Nations Regional Centre for Peace, Disarmament and Development in Latin America and the Caribbean, which has undoubtedly helped the countries of the region implement disarmament measures in various fields. The Rio Group congratulates the Director of the Regional Centre on its great work. It is a model to be followed.

The Rio Group will cooperate with you, Mr. Chairman, to ensure that the work of the First Committee concludes successfully, and trusts in your leadership to achieve that objective. You can count on the full support and cooperation of the Rio Group.

The Chairperson (*spoke in French*): I remind delegations of the need to abide by the time limits.

Mr. De Alba (Mexico) (*spoke in Spanish*): First, Sir, I congratulate you on your election to preside over our work, and extend my congratulations to the Vice-Chairmen. I assure you of the full support of my delegation and my personal support at all times. I also wish to express appreciation to the outgoing Chairperson, Ambassador Mona Juul of Norway, for the splendid job done at the previous session.

Since this is the first session of the General Assembly since Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon took office, we wish to stress the importance of his unambiguous commitment to promote the disarmament agenda, which Ambassador Sergio Duarte reminded us of this morning. The designation of Ambassador Duarte as his High Representative for Disarmament Affairs is a very positive sign, and we are encouraged by it. Mexico is certain that, as the head of the Office for Disarmament Affairs, the High Representative will be able to present options that will help us make progress with the disarmament agenda. I personally congratulate Ambassador Duarte and repeat the full readiness of the delegation of Mexico to help ensure the success of our work and of his.

I do not want to speak at length now, because most of the issues of interest and concern to us were dealt with in the Rio Group statement or will be dealt with by me later when I speak on behalf of the New Agenda Coalition. However, there are certain lines of thought that I want to share.

First, I repeat my delegation's belief that there is room to make progress on revitalizing the First Committee. We are convinced that one way is by broadening the time frame for the submission of draft resolutions. In this connection, my delegation is prepared to reconsider the time frame for the submission of certain draft resolutions, in order to focus efforts and give more attention to the substantive consideration of each initiative. We urge other delegations to explore such possibilities.

I also wish to refer to the work of other forums responsible for disarmament and meetings held during the sixty-first session.

First, at the meeting of the Preparatory Committee for the 2010 Review Conference of the Parties to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT), held recently in Vienna, it was possible to adopt the agenda, though not without difficulties. Mexico hopes that in the preparations for the 2010 Review Conference the nuclear States will show progress in implementing the measures agreed in 2000 on the destruction of their arsenals. Mexico trusts that we will be capable of agreeing on effective measures to strengthen the NPT, including achieving its universality.

Mexico is concerned that, nearly 40 years after the adoption of the Treaty, we still face many challenges. We call upon the Secretary-General and his High Representative to remain vigilant and monitor closely developments leading up to the second meeting of the Preparatory Committee so as to ensure its success.

I turn to the work of the Disarmament Commission, which held its second round in April this year, when my delegation expressed its concern about the lack of substantive progress on the document being prepared. We wonder whether it would be a good idea to reconsider the direction taken by the Commission, in order to try to find a more concrete and pragmatic approach. My delegation is very willing to engage in informal consultations with other delegations in dealing with this matter.

I refer next to the Open-ended Working Group to consider the objectives and agenda, including the possible establishment of a preparatory committee, for the fourth special session of the General Assembly devoted to disarmament (SSOD-IV).

My delegation expresses its appreciation of the work performed by Ambassador Alfredo Labbé of Chile, representing the countries of the Non-Aligned Movement (NAM). The format he chose was the key to expressing several different ideas. Among those that my delegation promoted was the establishment of a group of experts to analyse possible agenda items for the conference. We believed that it would be wise to ask the Secretary-General to entrust this task to the Advisory Board on Disarmament Matters. My delegation is very willing to deal with this question informally with other interested delegations.

In any case, the Working Group in its current form has not been the appropriate place to deal with these issues, and we therefore believe that some time for thought should be allowed before it is reconvened.

In conclusion, I emphasize that Mexico attaches particular importance to topics relating to conventional weapons. The first is combating the illicit traffic in small arms and light weapons and the omnibus resolution that served as the basis for the preparation of the biennial conference to be held in 2008. The second relates to the Group of Governmental Experts responsible for exploring the feasibility, scope and parameters for a comprehensive, legally binding instrument establishing common international standards for the import, export and transfer of conventional weapons.

My delegation will make more extensive comments on these items in the relevant segments of the debate. It will also seek during the present session to promote the question of nuclear-free zones. In this context, we welcome initiatives such as that put forward by the delegation of Indonesia.

Mr. Pereira Gomes (Portugal): I have the honour to speak on behalf of the European Union and the countries that align themselves with this statement.

First, I congratulate you, Sir, on your election to the chairmanship of the First Committee and also the other members of the Bureau on their election.

I would also like to take this opportunity to welcome the appointment of Ambassador Sergio Duarte as High Representative for Disarmament Affairs. The European Union looks forward to working closely with him.

In this statement I will focus on key challenges that we all face. I will elaborate on specific topics later,

during the cluster debates. For the purpose of efficiency and to save time, I will shorten my oral statement today. The full text of this general statement has been distributed.

The European Union is deeply committed to the development of an effective multilateral system based on well-functioning international institutions and a rule-based international order. We want international organizations, regimes and treaties to be effective in confronting threats to international peace and security.

The verification mechanisms should be reinforced, and new effective verification mechanisms should be created when and/or where necessary to ensure full compliance with obligations contained in multilateral disarmament and non-proliferation treaties and agreements. Violations of these obligations should be addressed appropriately. That is why the European Union considers that strengthening the authority of the United Nations should be a priority for all nations. In this context, the work done in the First Committee and its ability to interact with other relevant United Nations bodies are of the utmost importance.

In the Outcome Document of the 2005 World Summit the Member States of the United Nations recognized that development, peace and security and human rights are interlinked and mutually reinforcing. The European Union Security Strategy adopted by the European Council in 2003 already enshrined these broad and comprehensive concepts of security. We live in a world where we all benefit from collective security and all suffer when it is absent. We therefore urgently need to build consensus on the actions and measures to confront common threats and challenges.

The European Union is committed to upholding, implementing and further sanctioning the multilateral disarmament and non-proliferation treaties and agreements. It is concerned about a possible further weakening of disarmament and arms control treaties and agreements concerning the European area. Progress is needed in the field of disarmament and non-proliferation in accordance with relevant international instruments and by negotiating new ones, such as a fissile material cut-off treaty (FMCT).

A standoff between those who give priority to disarmament and those who give priority to non-proliferation should be avoided. The European Union is guided by its Strategy against the Proliferation of Weapons of Mass Destruction, which

commits it to act with resolve using all instruments and policies at its disposal to prevent, deter and where possible eliminate proliferation programmes that are of concern worldwide.

Meeting the challenge of proliferation risks is a key element in the European Union's relations with other organizations and with third countries. The proliferation of weapons of mass destruction and their means of delivery is potentially the greatest threat to global security, and the spread of missile technology adds a further element of concern.

International treaty regimes and effective verification mechanisms remain essential. They should be upheld and fully implemented. The European Union is actively promoting universality and assisting countries with national implementation of all relevant treaties through its joint actions. The European Union welcomes the recently published report of the Panel of Governmental Experts on verification.

Terrorism continues to be a serious threat to international peace and security. The adoption of the Global Counter-Terrorism Strategy by the General Assembly the year before last sent a strong signal of the unity of Member States in condemning terrorism in all its forms.

The European Union last year welcomed the reiteration of Security Council resolution 1540 (2004) and the extension of the mandate of the 1540 Committee for a further two years by Security Council resolution 1673 (2006). We call for the full implementation of these legally binding resolutions, which are an essential mechanism to prevent weapons of mass destruction, their means of delivery or manufacture, falling into the hands of non-State actors worldwide. The European Union is ready to continue to provide assistance, in particular in building a legal and administrative infrastructure, training respective national authorities, and sharing our experience of implementation. It is important that the mandate of the 1540 Committee be further extended. We would welcome timely preparations in this respect.

The Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT) remains the cornerstone of the global nuclear non-proliferation regime, the essential foundation for the pursuit of nuclear disarmament in accordance with its article VI, and an important element in the further development of nuclear energy applications for peaceful purposes. The Treaty is as

vital as ever. We continue to defend that consensus on the basis of the framework established by the NPT, by supporting the Decisions and Resolution adopted at the 1995 Review and Extension Conference and the Final Document of the 2000 Review Conference, and will bear in mind the current situation. The European Union is fully committed to the current review cycle of the NPT, and stands by its Common Position agreed on 25 April 2005 relating to the NPT Review Conference.

The International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) Comprehensive Safeguards Agreement and its additional protocols constitute the current IAEA verification standards. The European Union considers the additional protocol to be an integral part of the IAEA safeguards system, and adherence to it should be considered an essential means of verifying the fulfilment of States parties' obligations under article III of the NPT.

The role of the Security Council as the final arbiter of international peace and security should be strengthened in order that it can take appropriate action in the event of non-compliance, inter alia with NPT obligations.

The NPT regime is under pressure from several challenges, in particular those posed by Iran's nuclear programme and by the Democratic People's Republic of Korea's self-declared possession and testing of nuclear weapons. Both issues continue to be a matter of profound concern for the European Union, and could entail serious risks for global security.

The European Union is deeply and directly involved in finding a negotiated solution to the Iranian nuclear issue and rebuilding international confidence in Iran's intentions. The European Union calls upon Iran to respond positively and swiftly to the demands of the international community to comply with the decisions and resolutions of the IAEA and the Security Council, in particular by suspending its enrichment-related and reprocessing activities, and thus creating the conditions for the resumption of negotiations.

In this regard, the European Union supports the statement on Iran issued on 28 September this year in New York by the Foreign Ministers of China, France, Germany, Russia, the United Kingdom and the United States, with the support of the High Representative of the European Union. The European Union hopes that the discussions between the IAEA and Iran on outstanding issues will, at least by November, meet the

targets laid down by the work plan. The European Union is united in its determination not to allow Iran to acquire military nuclear capabilities and to see resolved all consequences of its nuclear programme in terms of proliferation.

We condemn the nuclear test of 9 October 2006 announced by the Democratic People's Republic of Korea. However, we welcome steps taken by the Democratic People's Republic of Korea to implement the agreement reached by the participants in the Six-Party Talks on 13 February this year. Nevertheless, much is still to be achieved in order to eliminate the dangers posed by its nuclear and ballistic missile programmes.

We were encouraged by the constructive, structured and substantive discussions that took place on a fissile material cut-off treaty during the first part of this year's session of the Conference on Disarmament, and by the momentum they created, momentum developed as a result of the joint initiative of the Six Presidents of the Conference on Disarmament last year.

The "P6" efforts have clearly been taken up and brought to an even higher level this year, leading to the appointment of coordinators for seven items of the Conference agenda, and culminating in the presentation of a presidential draft decision on a programme of work (CD/2007/L.1) and two further documents (CD/2007/CRP.5 and CD/2007/CRP.6), issued in a serious, patient and strenuous process to add clarity and to provide answers to questions raised by a few delegations on document CD/2007/L.1.

Those three documents have fostered our hope that finally the stalemate in the Conference on Disarmament can be overcome. We regret that no consensus on them has so far been established. We continue to urge those very few remaining States members of the Conference on Disarmament that have not done so to join the consensus on the basis of the documents on the table in order for the Conference on Disarmament to resume its negotiating role in early 2008.

The European Union recognizes that an arms race in outer space must be prevented. Given the international community's increased involvement in space-based activities aimed at global development and progress, such prevention is an essential condition for the strengthening of strategic stability and for the

promotion of international cooperation in the exploration and use of outer space for peaceful purposes.

For this reason, the European Union recently forwarded its joint reply to General Assembly resolution 61/75 entitled "Transparency and confidence-building measures in outer space activities". The reply contained concrete proposals by the European Union in the interest of maintaining international peace and security and promoting international cooperation and the prevention of an arms race in outer space. Indeed, the European Union and its member States are actively engaged in space programmes and increasingly dependent on outer space for their economic and industrial development as well as for their security. The European Union was very concerned about the test of an anti-satellite weapon early this year and the amount of dangerous space debris it caused.

The Biological and Toxin Weapons Convention (BTWC) gained new impetus at the Sixth Review Conference, which took place last year. We welcome the Final Document adopted by the Review Conference and, in particular, the decision on the new intersessional programme 2007-2010 and the establishment of the Implementation Support Unit.

The Chemical Weapons Convention (CWC) has an essential role in countering the threat of chemical weapons. It is unique among disarmament and non-proliferation treaties in banning, in a verifiable way, an entire class of weapons of mass destruction.

The European Union remains guided by its commitment to uphold, implement and further strengthen the multilateral disarmament and non-proliferation treaties and agreements. Based, inter alia, on the European Union Security Strategy and its Strategy against the Proliferation of Weapons of Mass Destruction, the European Union will continue to work together with its partners and other countries or groups of countries engaged in disarmament and non-proliferation. This will facilitate a better understanding of each other's positions, easing tensions and promoting dialogue and cooperation.

In parallel with preventing the spread of weapons of mass destruction and their means of delivery, we are committed to curbing the proliferation and misuse of small arms and light weapons and their ammunition, which cause hundreds of thousands of human deaths

every year. We have committed ourselves to addressing this problem through the United Nations Programme of Action to Prevent, Combat and Eradicate the Illicit Trade in Small Arms and Light Weapons in All Its Aspects. We will need to assess together our achievements and shortcomings in implementing that Programme.

The European Union welcomes the growing support in all parts of the world for an international arms trade treaty. That support was expressed notably during last year's session of the General Assembly, where 153 States voted to establish a Group of Governmental Experts on a treaty. The support is also apparent in the volume of replies received by the Secretary-General in response to his request for the views of Member States.

The European Union firmly supports the elaboration of a comprehensive legally binding instrument establishing within the framework of the United Nations common international standards for the import, export and transfer of conventional arms. The European Union and its individual member States are committed to playing an active role in this process.

The Convention on Certain Conventional Weapons (CCW) constitutes an essential and integral part of international humanitarian law. The European Union is encouraged by the success of the Third Review Conference held last year, and commends its results contained in the Final Document. The European Union reiterates its call for the full implementation and universalization of the Convention, and hereby calls upon all States not yet parties to it to ratify it or accede to it as soon as possible.

The European Union is deeply concerned about the humanitarian impact caused by cluster munitions. We consider that this issue is a vital element of the work of the CCW. With this in mind, the European Union submitted to the CCW Group of Governmental Experts meeting last June a proposal for a negotiating mandate on cluster munitions. The Group of Governmental Experts meeting then recommended to the Meeting of the High Contracting Parties to the CCW that it decide how best to address the humanitarian impact of cluster munitions as a matter of urgency, including the possibility of a new instrument, and taking into account all the documents put forward at the meeting of the Group of Governmental Experts, including our proposal.

We submitted that proposal with the aim of concluding by the end of 2008 a legally binding instrument that prohibits the use, production, transfer and stockpiling of cluster munitions that cause unacceptable harm to civilians and includes provisions on cooperation and assistance. We did so with the aim of enabling the CCW to clearly show its relevance to matters of international humanitarian law in general and humanitarian concerns about cluster munitions in particular. We call upon all High Contracting Parties to the CCW to support the European Union proposal for a negotiating mandate. The European Union will make every effort to gain for its proposal the support of the High Contracting Parties at their meeting next month.

We reiterate the European Union's continuous commitment to mine action and support for the full implementation and universalization of the Convention on the Prohibition of the Use, Stockpiling, Production and Transfer of Anti-personnel Mines and on Their Destruction. We welcome the progress achieved so far. We call upon all States that have not yet done so to ratify or accede to the Convention as soon as possible.

The United Nations and its Member States will be judged by their ability to respond to the most pressing threats to international peace and security. In order to tackle these, the European Union will work together with its partners and other countries or groups of countries.

Mr. Natalegawa (Indonesia): I have the honour and privilege to speak on behalf of the Non-Aligned Movement.

Allow me first to congratulate you, Sir, on your assumption of the chairmanship of the Committee. I also congratulate the other members of the Bureau on their election. We are confident that your able leadership and vast experience will further the work of the Committee. The Non-Aligned Movement extends its full support and cooperation in facilitating your task of presiding over this sixty-second session of the First Committee.

The Non-Aligned Movement welcomes the restructuring of the Department for Disarmament Affairs into the Office for Disarmament Affairs as part of the Secretary-General's commitment to revitalize the international disarmament agenda. In this regard, we congratulate Ambassador Sergio Duarte on his appointment as High Representative of the Secretary-General for Disarmament Affairs, and reaffirm the

Non-Aligned Movement's continued support for the work of the new Office.

The Non-Aligned Movement strongly underlines and reaffirms that multilateralism and multilaterally agreed solutions, in accordance with the United Nations Charter, provide the only sustainable method of addressing disarmament and international security issues. It is our continued determination to promote multilateralism as the core principle of all our efforts and negotiations in these areas. We will continue to work constructively towards that end, including in this session of the First Committee.

The Non-Aligned Movement emphasizes that progress in nuclear disarmament and non-proliferation in all its aspects is essential to strengthen international peace and security, and we appeal to all States to pursue and intensify multilateral negotiations as agreed by consensus in the Final Document of the first special session of the General Assembly devoted to disarmament with a view to achieving nuclear disarmament under effective international control and strengthening the international disarmament, arms control and non-proliferation regimes.

As set out in the Final Document of the Havana Summit, the Non-Aligned Movement reiterates its principled position on nuclear disarmament, which remains its highest priority, and on the related issue of nuclear non-proliferation in all its aspects, and underscores its deep concern over the lack of progress towards accomplishing the total elimination of nuclear arsenals by nuclear-weapon States. We also express our serious concern that the development of nuclear weapons is in contravention of the assurances provided by nuclear-weapon States at the conclusion of the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty (CTBT).

The Non-Aligned Movement believes that the efforts of the international community directed at non-proliferation should parallel simultaneous efforts aimed at nuclear disarmament. The Movement further believes that the issues of non-proliferation should be resolved through political and diplomatic means, and that the measures in this regard should be taken within the framework of international law, relevant multilateral conventions and the Charter.

The Non-Aligned Movement reaffirms the need for all States to fulfil their obligations in relation to arms control and disarmament and to prevent the proliferation of weapons of mass destruction in all its

aspects. The Movement reiterates that the ultimate objective of the efforts of States in the disarmament process is general and complete disarmament.

The Non-Aligned Movement also reaffirms that the total elimination of nuclear weapons is the only absolute guarantee against the use or threat of the use of nuclear weapons. Therefore, pending the total elimination of such weapons, efforts for the conclusion of a universal, unconditional and legally binding instrument on security assurances to non-nuclear-weapon States should be pursued as a matter of priority.

The ongoing difficult situation we face in the field of disarmament and international security is unfortunate. We encourage all parties to intensify efforts to resolve the current impasse in achieving nuclear disarmament and non-proliferation in all its aspects.

The Non-Aligned Movement reaffirms the centrality of the First Committee as an essential subsidiary body of the General Assembly in addressing the important issues in the field of disarmament and international security, in particular due to the difficult and complex situation in this field.

The Non-Aligned Movement would like to commend the Secretariat for the launching of the "Quickfirst" website, which we hope will serve as a useful tool in facilitating our work.

While underlining the role of the Conference on Disarmament as the sole multilateral negotiating body for disarmament, we reiterate our call on it to agree on a balanced and comprehensive programme of work.

The Non-Aligned Movement reaffirms the importance and relevance of the Disarmament Commission as the sole specialized deliberative body within the United Nations multilateral disarmament machinery, and calls upon Member States to display the necessary political will and flexibility in order to achieve agreement on recommendations based on its two agenda items during the current cycle.

The 2010 Non-Proliferation Treaty (NPT) review cycle began modestly this year with the first session of the Preparatory Committee in Vienna. We take note that delegations have engaged in useful substantive discussion. In this regard, the Non-Aligned Movement States parties to the NPT hope that the results of the first Preparatory Committee session will serve as

building blocks for subsequent Preparatory Committee sessions and the Review Conference.

We take note with concern that large stocks of nuclear weapons continue to exist and that some nuclear-weapon States are keen to develop even more sophisticated and greater arsenals of such weapons. The Non-Aligned Movement stresses the significance of achieving universal adherence to the CTBT, including by all nuclear-weapon States, which, *inter alia*, should contribute to the process of nuclear disarmament. The Non-Aligned Movement reiterates that if the objectives of the Treaty were to be fully realized, the continued commitment to nuclear disarmament of all State signatories, especially the nuclear-weapon States, would be essential.

The Non-Aligned Movement States parties to the Biological Weapons Convention (BWC) commend the agreement on a Final Document at the Review Conference last year as a positive development, not only in the implementation of the Convention but also in multilateral security and disarmament diplomacy in general.

The Non-Aligned Movement States parties to the Chemical Weapons Convention (CWC) further take note of the tenth anniversary of the entry into force of that Convention, and call on all States to continue working to make it more effective.

The Non-Aligned Movement States parties to the Convention on the Prohibition of the Use, Stockpiling, Production and Transfer of Anti-personnel Mines and on Their Destruction also note the commemoration of its tenth anniversary, and look forward to the coming eighth meeting of the States parties, to be held in Amman, Jordan, from 17 to 22 November this year.

The Non-Aligned Movement remains deeply concerned over the illicit transfer, manufacture and circulation of small arms and light weapons and their excessive accumulation and uncontrolled spread in many regions. We also emphasize the importance of early and full implementation of 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. We hope that the efforts of the United Nations with regard to the implementation of the Programme of Action will be focused on assisting and enabling developing countries to tackle the problem of illicit transfer, manufacture and circulation of small arms and light weapons. We also

take note of the conclusion of the work of the Group of Governmental Experts on illicit brokering.

The Non-Aligned Movement takes note of the convening of the Open-ended Working Group on the fourth special session of the General Assembly devoted to disarmament and regrets that the mandate of the Working Group cannot be accomplished, because of the position of a certain delegation. We recall that the Non-Aligned Movement submitted proposals on the objectives and agenda of a fourth special session on disarmament during the substantive sessions of the Working Group.

The Non-Aligned Movement stresses the importance of the General Assembly's continuing its active consideration with a view to reaching consensus at its sixty-second session on the objectives and agenda of such a session, and the establishment of a preparatory committee, including by reconvening the Open-ended Working Group to consider the objectives and agenda, including the possible establishment of a preparatory committee, for the fourth special session of the General Assembly devoted to disarmament.

The Non-Aligned Movement continues to consider the establishment of nuclear-weapon-free zones created by the Treaties of Tlatelolco, Rarotonga, Bangkok, Pelindaba and Semipalatinsk, and Mongolia's nuclear-weapon-free status, as positive steps and important measures towards attaining the objective of nuclear disarmament and non-proliferation. We welcome efforts aimed at establishing nuclear-weapon-free zones in all regions of the world, and call for cooperation and broad consultation in order to achieve agreements freely arrived at among the States of the regions concerned.

The Non-Aligned Movement reiterates its support for the establishment in the Middle East of a nuclear-weapon-free zone, in accordance with relevant Security Council and General Assembly resolutions adopted by consensus. Pending the establishment of such a zone, the Non-Aligned Movement demands that Israel accede to the NPT without delay and promptly place all its nuclear facilities under comprehensive International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) safeguards.

The Non-Aligned Movement reaffirms the need to respect the inalienable right of developing countries to engage in the research, production and use of nuclear energy for peaceful purposes, without discrimination. The Non-Aligned Movement also

emphasizes the responsibility of developed countries to support the legitimate requirement of developing countries for nuclear energy.

The international community needs to make collective efforts to confront the serious challenges before us, to realize a future that is stable and free of deadly weapons. We must show greater political will to achieve our common objectives in this sixty-second session.

I conclude by reiterating the need for all States to demonstrate the necessary political will during the meetings of the First Committee. In this regard, the Non-Aligned Movement will actively and constructively participate in the deliberations and negotiations, including by submitting its resolutions and decisions.

Mr. De Alba (Mexico) (*spoke in Spanish*): I have the honour to speak on behalf of the New Agenda Coalition, composed of Brazil, Egypt, Ireland, New Zealand, South Africa, Sweden and my own country, Mexico.

Please accept our congratulations, Sir, on your assumption of the chairmanship of the First Committee for this session. I assure you of the Coalition's support for your efforts, which we are certain will guide us towards success in our work.

Far from being discouraged by serious developments currently affecting the nuclear disarmament and nuclear non-proliferation regime, the New Agenda Coalition is motivated to invest every effort in achieving the goal of full and universal implementation of, and adherence to, the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT). The Coalition reiterates its firm belief that, despite the challenges it faces, the NPT remains the cornerstone of global nuclear disarmament and the nuclear non-proliferation regime. Its three pillars — nuclear disarmament, nuclear non-proliferation and the peaceful uses of nuclear energy — constitute an important foundation for the maintenance of international peace and security.

At a time when we observe attempts to justify new investment in military nuclear technology and the development of new military doctrines emphasizing the importance of nuclear weapons, the New Agenda Coalition nevertheless sees some modest signs that may develop positively to create the conditions for the

adoption of specific measures leading to the elimination of the threat of nuclear weapons and the strengthening of the nuclear non-proliferation regime.

In this respect, and after the discussions on substantive issues held during the first session of the Preparatory Committee for the 2010 Review Conference of the Parties to the NPT in Vienna, the New Agenda Coalition hopes that three years from now we will all be able to ensure a productive and successful outcome of the Review Conference. This would consist of the adoption of specific measures aimed at strengthening the NPT in all its aspects, in order ultimately to achieve the objective of a nuclear-weapon-free world. We call upon all States parties to make every effort not only to guarantee that the agreements resulting from the Review Conference will constitute a further step towards complete nuclear disarmament, but also to transform them into effective and irreversible actions.

The New Agenda Coalition firmly believes that for the preparatory process for the 2010 Review Conference to be successful we must build on the experience of past Review Conferences, particularly those held in 1995 and 2000. In this respect, the Coalition stresses the importance of full respect for and implementation of all commitments made at those Conferences. The 1995 Review and Extension Conference adopted in particular the Decision on Principles and Objectives for Nuclear Non-Proliferation and Disarmament and a resolution on the Middle East. These should be implemented.

In the Final Document of the 2000 Review Conference, States parties committed themselves to 13 practical steps to ensure the successful attainment of the Treaty's objectives, including the unequivocal undertaking of the nuclear-weapon States to eliminate their nuclear arsenals.

Unfortunately, that objective has not been realized and, even more troubling, there have been attempts to disregard the unequivocal commitment undertaken. The New Agenda Coalition strongly urges the nuclear-weapon States to accelerate the implementation of the results achieved in 1995 and 2000, which provided for the total elimination of nuclear weapons through systematic and progressive efforts.

The Coalition firmly believes that there is an urgent need to achieve the universality of the NPT,

which would not only strengthen the nuclear disarmament and non-proliferation regime, but would also be a constructive step in promoting the global objective of international peace and security. Therefore, we call upon the international community to make every possible effort to achieve that objective, and we again urge India, Israel and Pakistan to accede to it promptly and without conditions as non-nuclear-weapon States.

Nuclear disarmament and nuclear non-proliferation are mutually reinforcing processes requiring urgent, irreversible progress on both fronts. It is therefore imperative to make progress towards the full and effective implementation of all the provisions of the NPT. All States parties should be held equally accountable with respect to strict compliance with their obligations under the Treaty.

Moreover, States must refrain from developing nuclear weapons with new military capabilities, and must not adopt doctrines or systems that blur the distinction between nuclear and conventional weapons, or lower the nuclear threshold. Such action would directly contradict the disarmament and non-proliferation provisions of the NPT. We reiterate our conviction that genuine implementation of irreversible, verifiable and transparent nuclear-weapon reductions will increase the confidence of the international community and lead to the total elimination of such weapons, so the Coalition will continue to call upon States to take firm steps in that direction.

As long as nuclear weapons exist it is imperative that the nuclear-weapon States reaffirm and respect fully their existing commitments with regard to security assurances, pending the conclusion of multilaterally negotiated legally binding security assurances for all non-nuclear-weapon States parties to the NPT. The New Agenda Coalition hopes that the constructive spirit of the current review cycle will create the momentum to initiate negotiations to this effect. The New Agenda Coalition stands ready to actively contribute to this process.

The cessation of all nuclear-weapon tests and all nuclear explosions constitutes an effective measure for nuclear disarmament and nuclear non-proliferation in all its aspects. The Coalition remains totally opposed to all nuclear-weapon tests and all other nuclear explosions. We have repeatedly stressed the importance

and urgency of obtaining the necessary signatures and ratifications to achieve the entry into force of the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty (CTBT), without delay and without conditions. Further progress in this direction will strengthen the norm against all nuclear-weapon tests established by the Treaty.

Pending the entry into force of the Treaty, the Coalition calls upon all States to uphold and maintain a moratorium on nuclear-weapon tests and all other nuclear explosions.

The New Agenda Coalition stresses the need for a peaceful solution of the nuclear issues on the Korean Peninsula through the successful implementation of the Joint Statement and the Initial Actions to implement it agreed in the framework of the Six-Party Talks. The New Agenda Coalition urges the Democratic People's Republic of Korea to rescind its announced withdrawal from the NPT.

The Coalition recognizes that there has been progress in the creation of nuclear-weapon-free zones in some regions, particularly in the southern hemisphere and in Central Asia. In this context, ratification of the Treaties of Tlatelolco, Rarotonga, Bangkok, Pelindaba and Semipalatinsk by all States of the region in question and all concerned States is of great importance. The particular regime established by Mongolia as a nuclear-weapon-free State is also relevant in this regard. States parties to those treaties should be encouraged to promote their common objectives, with a view to enhancing cooperation and communication between nuclear-weapon-free zones as a means to strengthen the nuclear disarmament and nuclear non-proliferation regime.

The New Agenda Coalition notes that, despite the adoption of the resolution on the Middle East as an integral part of the outcome of the 1995 NPT Review and Extension Conference, no progress has been achieved in the establishment of a nuclear-weapon-free zone in that region. The Coalition renews its support for the establishment of a Middle East zone free of nuclear weapons, as well as other weapons of mass destruction, and deems it urgent to take concrete steps to achieve this objective.

The New Agenda Coalition recalls that the 2000 Review Conference agreed on the need for negotiations in the Conference on Disarmament on a non-discriminatory, multilateral and internationally and effectively verifiable

treaty banning the production of fissile material for nuclear weapons or other nuclear explosive devices.

The 2000 Review Conference also urged the Conference on Disarmament to agree on a programme of work which includes the immediate commencement of negotiations on such a treaty with a view to their conclusion within five years, a timetable that unfortunately has not been met. Nevertheless, the New Agenda Coalition recognizes the work done during the 2007 session of the Conference on Disarmament and the commitment shown by member States to move the Conference out of its longstanding impasse.

The Coalition urges member States of the Conference on Disarmament to take advantage of the momentum created in the Conference to build on the substantive discussions held under all agenda items, as well as the presidential proposal that will enable the Conference to begin its substantive work and start negotiations during its 2008 session.

Further progress on nuclear disarmament is a major decisive step in achieving and sustaining international peace and stability. The New Agenda Coalition reaffirms that any presumption of the indefinite possession of nuclear weapons by the nuclear-weapon States is incompatible with the integrity and sustainability of the nuclear non-proliferation regime and with the broader goal of the maintenance of international peace and security.

International security is a collective concern requiring collective commitment and responsibility. The New Agenda Coalition believes that the very existence of nuclear weapons and the possibility of their use constitute a threat to international peace and security. The need to eliminate nuclear weapons remains as urgent as ever. For this reason, the New Agenda Coalition will submit a draft resolution on this agenda item. The Coalition also takes this opportunity to appeal to all States to support that draft resolution.

Mr. Cheng Jingye (China) (*spoke in Chinese*): First, allow me to congratulate you, Sir, on your election to the chairmanship of the Committee for this session. We are confident that you will guide it to success. The Chinese delegation assures you and other delegations of its full cooperation.

At present the international situation is undergoing profound and complicated changes. It is the common aspiration of peoples in all countries to

maintain peace and promote development. However, in the current world there still exist many disharmonious and unstable factors. Traditional and non-traditional security threats remain serious. The ghost of the cold-war mentality continues to haunt the world.

Despite the great hopes cherished by all countries for the international arms control and non-proliferation process, divergent views regarding the priorities of its agenda still remain. With further development of globalization, countries share common interests and rely on each other as far as security is concerned. No country can achieve security on its own.

To effectively address various security challenges and to enhance common security, it is imperative that countries pursue a new security concept characterized by mutual trust, mutual benefit, equality and coordination, adherence to multilateralism, preservation and strengthening of the legal system in the international arms control field and in non-proliferation and the enhancement of international cooperation.

China is firmly dedicated to peaceful development, and pursues a national defence policy that is purely defensive in nature. China has always actively participated in international arms control and non-proliferation efforts and has made unremitting efforts in promoting the resolution of international and regional security issues, in which China has been advocating and earnestly practising the new security concept featuring mutual trust, mutual benefit, equality and coordination.

China attaches importance to military transparency and actively promotes mutual trust in the field of security among countries. Recently the Chinese Government decided to report to the Secretary-General annually, starting this year, its military expenditures for the latest fiscal year, and it will resume providing the Secretary-General annually with the requested data for the United Nations Register of Conventional Arms. These steps further demonstrate that China supports the important role played by the United Nations in promoting transparency in armaments and mutual trust in the field of security among nations.

China has always pursued a responsible and transparent nuclear policy. China always stands for the complete prohibition and thorough destruction of nuclear weapons, and has honoured its commitment regarding no first use of nuclear weapons and its

unconditional undertaking not to use or threaten to use nuclear weapons against non-nuclear-weapon States or nuclear-weapon-free zones.

China's defensive national defence policy and its self-defence nuclear strategy determine that China's very limited nuclear arsenal is purely for the purpose of self-defence. China's nuclear policy has never changed, nor will it change in future.

China has never evaded its responsibilities in nuclear disarmament, and is actively dedicated to promoting the international nuclear disarmament process. The Chinese Government honours its commitment on the nuclear test moratorium and has been promoting a careful review by the National People's Congress of the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty (CTBT), with a view to ratifying the Treaty at an early date.

China supports the early start of the negotiations on a fissile material cut-off treaty (FMCT) at the Conference on Disarmament in Geneva, on the basis of a programme of work acceptable to all.

China also attaches importance to the new round of the review process of the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT) and is ready to work with other parties to promote the positive achievement of the 2010 NPT Review Conference.

This year marks the fortieth anniversary of the entry into force of the outer-space Treaty. It is the common task of the international community to ensure the peaceful use of outer space and prevent an arms race there. China has always stood for the peaceful use of outer space and is firmly opposed to the weaponization of outer space. China has been actively appealing to the international community to negotiate and conclude a new international legal instrument in this regard. China hopes that substantive work on this issue will be launched at the Conference on Disarmament as soon as possible.

Fundamentally, the non-proliferation of weapons of mass destruction serves the common interests of all countries. China maintains that a comprehensive approach should be adopted in addressing both the symptoms and the root causes of the proliferation of weapons of mass destruction. This requires not only commitment to continuously improving the international security environment, but also earnestly

preserving and enhancing the universality and effectiveness of the international non-proliferation regime.

As well as abandoning double standards, it is of equal importance to stick to the approach of resolving disputes on non-proliferation issues through dialogue and negotiation. Any non-proliferation effort should be conducive to safeguarding international and regional peace and stability. The relationship between non-proliferation and the rights to the peaceful uses of science and technologies should be properly handled in order to ensure the rights of peaceful use, while effectively preventing any proliferation activity.

China has been dedicated to realizing the denuclearization of the Korean Peninsula and maintaining peace and stability in the peninsula and North-East Asia. At the end of September the second session of the sixth round of the Six-Party Talks was held in Beijing. With the joint efforts of all parties concerned, the joint document "Second-Phase Actions for the Implementation of the Joint Statement" was adopted, marking a new step forward for the Six-Party Talks and the denuclearization of the Korean Peninsula. China will continue to closely coordinate and cooperate with the other parties concerned in implementing the relevant agreements in a comprehensive and balanced manner, with a view to constantly advancing the Six-Party Talks.

China has always stood for a peaceful resolution of the Iranian nuclear issue through political and diplomatic means, and has been actively participating in relevant diplomatic efforts. China welcomes the understandings on the modalities of resolution of the outstanding issues reached between Iran and the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA), and hopes that substantive progress can be achieved at an early date. China also hopes that all parties concerned can further show flexibility, exercise patience and stick to the cause of peaceful resolution in seeking a comprehensive, long-term and appropriate solution to the Iranian nuclear issue. China will continue to play a constructive role in this regard.

This year also marks the tenth anniversary of the entry into force of the Chemical Weapons Convention (CWC). Over the past decade the universality of the Convention has been greatly enhanced, and its implementation has been smooth and successful on the whole. The Convention has played an important role in

the destruction of chemical weapons and the prevention of their proliferation. China has faithfully honoured its obligations under the Convention and has made a due contribution to its smooth implementation. China calls on all parties to make great efforts in fully implementing the Convention.

China attaches great importance to the inherent concerns caused by landmines, cluster munitions, small arms and light weapons. China supports effective measures to properly resolve relevant issues within the framework of the Convention on Certain Conventional Weapons and the United Nations Programme on Small Arms and Light Weapons.

Peace, development and cooperation have become the trend of current times. As the biggest developing country, China is more and more closely connected to other countries. The common interests shared by China and other countries are constantly increasing. China needs a peaceful and stable international environment for its development. At the same time, China's development will further promote international peace and security.

China is ready to work with all other countries to firmly promote the multilateral arms control and non-proliferation process in an effort to build a harmonious world of enduring peace and common prosperity.

Ms. Ribeiro Viotti (Brazil): Please accept my congratulations, Sir, on your election to the chairmanship of the First Committee. Rest assured of the full cooperation of the Brazilian delegation in what we hope will be a very productive session.

I am very pleased to greet Ambassador Sergio Duarte in his capacity as High Representative for Disarmament Affairs. I am certain that under the guidance of Ambassador Duarte — whose distinguished career in multilateral diplomacy, particularly in the field of disarmament and non-proliferation, speaks for itself — the Office for Disarmament Affairs will carry forward the tradition of excellence of the former Department for Disarmament Affairs and significantly contribute to the advancement of the disarmament and non-proliferation agenda.

We fully associate ourselves with the views expressed by the representative of the Dominican Republic on behalf of the Rio Group, as well as those

by the representative of Mexico on behalf of the New Agenda Coalition.

Brazil strongly supports the Secretary-General's recent initiative to revitalize the disarmament and non-proliferation agenda through a more consistent and focused effort. His personal commitment in this regard, and the actions of the newly created Office for Disarmament Affairs could indeed provide the much needed leadership in support of our efforts to overcome current deadlocks that have prevented progress. This session of the First Committee, the first under the Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon administration, therefore has a unique role to play in discussing renewed options for disarmament, non-proliferation and arms control.

We witness today a gradual, steady deterioration of the multilateral disarmament machinery. Successive setbacks and deadlocks sadly demonstrate the lack of common ground and an increasing tendency towards the non-fulfilment of commitments and obligations undertaken under the relevant international legally binding instruments.

In our view, the lack of substantive progress in the arms control field should not lead us into hopelessness or apathy, but, rather, should serve as an encouragement to renewed action. The task at hand is to conceive new initiatives and suggestions that may coalesce into practical, achievable recommendations in the field of disarmament and set the ground for a more favourable international scenario to emerge.

Despite all the difficulties, there are some recent encouraging signs. Brazil believes the report of the Weapons of Mass Destruction Commission published last year, entitled "Weapons of Terror: Freeing the World of Nuclear, Biological and Chemical Arms", is a useful tool in helping to identify some reasons for the current stagnation in global arms control and disarmament forums.

Moreover, the article by four eminent former United States high officials published last January in *The Wall Street Journal*, endorsing concrete steps towards nuclear disarmament, is undoubtedly positive. Equally encouraging are the words of the former Foreign Secretary of the United Kingdom, Margaret Beckett, last June at the Carnegie Endowment seminar in support of a genuine commitment to, and concrete action on, nuclear disarmament. These ideas should be

given careful consideration by the international community.

The Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT) continues to be the cornerstone of the global nuclear non-proliferation regime, the essential instrument for the implementation of nuclear disarmament and the guarantee of States' rights to the development of nuclear energy applications for peaceful purposes. The Treaty is as vital as ever.

At the start of a new review cycle on the implementation of the NPT there are worrying signs in the form of initiatives that do not conform to the objectives of the Treaty. The selective implementation of disarmament obligations agreed by consensus is accompanied by progressive efforts to strengthen non-proliferation mechanisms which could restrict cooperation for the use and development of nuclear technology for peaceful purposes.

Today, as we review the implementation of disarmament commitments, we cannot hide the disappointment and avoid the perception that the promise made by the nuclear-weapon States towards nuclear disarmament has fallen short of our expectations. The modest achievements in reducing nuclear arsenals have a precarious basis, as they are not the result of multilaterally negotiated irreversible and verifiable agreements, and thus can be easily rolled back.

That is the main reason behind the proposal put forward by Brazil last May in Vienna at the first Preparatory Committee session for the 2010 NPT Review Conference that the secretariat, based on the information available, put together a comparative table of the measures undertaken by the nuclear-weapon States in compliance with obligations under article VI. This measure would add much needed transparency to the nuclear disarmament process and provide States with the means for a better evaluation of progress in this field.

Moreover, there seems to be no sense of urgency regarding the entry into force of the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty (CTBT). Brazil, along with the overwhelming majority of NPT States parties, deems the entry into force of the CTBT as an essential step towards nuclear non-proliferation and disarmament. The longer the Treaty remains ineffective, the more detrimental this situation becomes to non-proliferation efforts. We cannot let it be

relegated to oblivion. To do so would represent a concession by all to the prospect in time of a new nuclear armament surge.

Nuclear-weapon-free zones, for their part, also have major significance in promoting nuclear disarmament and preventing nuclear weapons proliferation. On the understanding that nuclear-weapon-free zones help enhance peace and security at the regional and global levels, this year again, Brazil, together with New Zealand, will be submitting a draft resolution on the issue of a Southern Hemisphere free of nuclear weapons.

In the field of conventional weapons, easy access to small arms and light weapons exacerbates conflicts, facilitates violent crime and terrorism, impedes post-conflict reconstruction and undermines long-term sustainable development. Brazil attaches the utmost importance to the Programme of Action's follow-up mechanism, which allows the international community to take into consideration the experience gathered in implementing its provisions since its adoption in 2001.

I should also like to express support for the arms trade treaty process. Brazil has been actively engaged in the discussions regarding the need for a legally binding instrument related to the trade in conventional arms. In our response earlier this year to the Secretary-General's request for views on the feasibility, scope and draft parameters of a treaty, Brazil underlined that discussions on this issue must lead to an instrument that effectively disciplines the trade in conventional arms without interfering with the right of States to manufacture, import, export, transfer and retain such weapons and ammunition. We now look forward to seeing a report compiling the views received from Member States in preparation for the work of the upcoming Group of Experts in 2008.

The results of this session of the First Committee will be measured not only by the number of resolutions we adopt, but also by our success in bringing the multilateral disarmament machinery towards re-engagement and productive discussions and negotiations. It is our hope that deliberations during the current session will provide an impetus towards a global consensus for meeting the contemporary challenges to international peace and security.

Mr. Abdelaziz (Egypt) (*spoke in Arabic*): My delegation is pleased to congratulate you, Sir, on your election to preside over the First Committee for this

session and looks forward to your efforts to steer it, through your wisdom and experience, towards the successful attainment of its objectives. My delegation assures you of its readiness to cooperate with you, the Bureau and all participating delegations in order to achieve the success we look forward to this year.

I wish to begin by expressing our support for the statement made by the permanent representative of Indonesia on behalf of the Non-Aligned Movement.

The international community continues to face a difficult historical era in the field of disarmament and non-proliferation, a phase marked by ever-increasing challenges confronting regional stability and international security today to the extent of threatening the credibility of treaties and conventions previously concluded by the international community in the hope of seeing States' compliance with their commitments bring about general and complete disarmament as one of the most noble objectives of the United Nations. Last year witnessed in particular a reversal with regard to both the objectives of nuclear disarmament and non-proliferation.

With regard to disarmament, nuclear-weapon States continue to shirk their responsibilities in taking significant positive steps in that field, except for one State. At least one other nuclear State continued to develop new classes of nuclear weapons, while yet another continued to increase the number of nuclear weapons it possesses.

As for non-proliferation, we witnessed efforts aimed at giving priority to non-proliferation while ignoring nuclear disarmament. We have also seen efforts to prevent the non-nuclear-weapon States from exercising their inherent right to the peaceful uses of nuclear technology and energy. Furthermore, we witnessed more damaging and dangerous efforts aimed at not putting pressure on States not parties to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT) to secure their accession as non-nuclear weapon States in order to realize the universality of that Treaty. Some even went, in violation of their commitments under the NPT, as far as expanding cooperation with such States in the military nuclear field, which significantly undermines the objectives and usefulness of the NPT.

The situation is indeed serious when some developed States openly challenge one of the key pillars of the NPT, namely, the inherent right of

non-nuclear-weapon States to the unconditional use of nuclear technology for peaceful purposes. How can that be, since such an inalienable right to the peaceful use of nuclear technology was the option accepted by non-nuclear-weapon States in return for giving up the military nuclear option in the context of a balanced treaty that never stipulated any right for nuclear-weapon States to maintain their nuclear weapons indefinitely? Nor has the Treaty ever foreseen allowing States not party to the NPT to acquire ever more nuclear weapons with the support of States parties to the NPT.

In the light of what I have just said, Egypt views with concern the prevailing international environment in the field of disarmament and non-proliferation at both the regional and international levels, particularly with regard to the international community's respect for the precedence of its traditional reference terms manifested by international instruments and treaties, United Nations resolutions and decisions of relevant international forums.

On this basis, and intending to address the double standards and politicization now prevailing in the field of disarmament, the Non-Aligned Movement continues to work for convening the fourth special session of the General Assembly devoted to disarmament, with the aim of restoring the confidence and credibility of the nuclear disarmament regime and hence the credibility of the non-proliferation regime.

The indefinite extension of the NPT in 1995 took place in the context of a package deal that included the adoption of the resolution on the Middle East substantively linking the indefinite extension of the Treaty, the establishment of a nuclear-weapon-free zone in the Middle East, and Israel's accession to the NPT and submission of all its nuclear facilities to the comprehensive safeguards regime of the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA). Despite that, we have not seen to date, 12 years since the adoption of the 1995 resolution on the Middle East, any significant progress in implementing that resolution.

It is indeed regrettable that the lack of will to implement the 1995 resolution on the Middle East coincides with successive setbacks and relapses in the field of disarmament, including the failure of the World Summit in 2005 to agree to language on disarmament, followed by the failure of the 2005 NPT Review Conference that same year.

Then there were the unsuccessful conclusion in 2006 of the Review Conference of the United Nations Programme of Action to Prevent, Combat and Eradicate the Illicit Trade in Small Arms and Light Weapons in All Its Aspects, the continued failure to date to agree on convening the fourth special session of the General Assembly devoted to disarmament and the failure of the Conference on Disarmament to begin substantive discussions on the main disarmament issues.

Yet the greatest danger threatening the purpose and objectives of the NPT is the threat of amending the guidelines of the Nuclear Suppliers Group (NSG) to allow its members to cooperate with non-NPT States in the nuclear field. That would be in outright contradiction of the letter and spirit of the NPT and of a special decision on the principles and objectives of nuclear non-proliferation and disarmament adopted as part of the indefinite extension package, especially that stipulated in its operative paragraphs 12 and 13. Egypt urges the members of the NSG to continue to respect and implement the commitments under the Treaty in accordance with the decision and not to contribute to the collapse of the nuclear non-proliferation regime by totally eliminating any chances of realizing the universality of the Treaty by cooperating with States outside its purview.

Egypt firmly believes in the purposes and objectives of nuclear disarmament and non-proliferation. The failure of efforts to make progress in the implementation of international instruments and resolutions should in no way allow the undermining of the achievements already made in these fields, nor should it lead, through the reinterpretation of those treaties, to serving the political agendas of the few with which the international community does not agree.

Bearing that in mind, Egypt annually presents a draft resolution on the establishment of a nuclear-weapon-free zone in the Middle East and presents, along with the other member States of the League of Arab States, another draft resolution on the risk of nuclear proliferation in the Middle East. As Egypt values the consensus built around the first draft resolution, it looks forward to a consensus of wills to implement it and to establish the zone at the earliest opportunity.

Egypt will work towards increasing the support enjoyed by the resolution on the risk of nuclear proliferation in the Middle East, on an objective and non-discriminatory basis, which is considered essential if the international community intends seriously and effectively to deal with this risk, especially in the light of statements reportedly made by leading Israeli officials regarding Israeli nuclear armament, reports that did not receive the necessary attention from nuclear disarmament or non-proliferation forums.

At the conclusion of the first session of the Preparatory Committee for the 2010 NPT Review Conference, and with the hope of a successful second session of the Preparatory Committee to be held in Geneva in 2008, it is necessary to take stock of the Committee's work to push forward the implementation of the decisions and resolutions of the 1995 Conference on the indefinite extension of the NPT, along with the 13 practical steps on nuclear disarmament adopted in 2000 to serve as a plan of action enhancing the credibility of the Treaty and the review process itself.

In this context, the New Agenda Coalition continues to stress the priority of preserving the NPT through calling upon the international community to implement it faithfully and responsibly and to respect the decisions of the 1995 and 2000 Review Conferences. The delegation of Egypt will present to its partners in the Coalition a new draft of a resolution on this matter. We look forward to the international community's renewed commitment to preserving the credibility of the NPT through increased support of and implementation of the resolution, together with earlier Assembly resolutions adopted in past years.

At the same time, Egypt supports the intense efforts made by the Conference on Disarmament in Geneva this year aimed at resuming its negotiations, in particular the efforts concerning the negotiation of a fissile material cut-off treaty based on the initiative of the six Presidents of the Conference. Egypt views those efforts as the basis for discussion on ways and means of making progress on this issue and reaffirms the mandate of Ambassador Shannon as endorsed by the Final Document of the 2000 NPT Review Conference. We believe this mandate will serve the global interest, since it is a consensus mandate that will help to safeguard the contribution of the proposed fissile material cut-off treaty towards achieving nuclear disarmament.

Egypt considers combating and preventing the illicit trade in small arms and light weapons as an important goal of the international community, which all States collectively need to achieve. We see no better base to achieve this than 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 as a politically binding consensus framework. We remain keen on its implementation and will submit national reports in this framework.

In this context, we welcome the conclusion in June of the work of the Group of Governmental Experts on the illicit brokering in small arms and light weapons and the consensus report of the experts supporting future constructive work on this issue. We also look forward to further efforts to deal with this dangerous phenomenon, which negatively and directly impacts international peace and security, particularly in the African continent, where such weapons are widely used.

Furthermore, Egypt closely monitors developments relating to the number of initiatives presented by the First Committee and elsewhere, including the proposed arms trade treaty to regulate the conventional arms trade, on which the General Assembly adopted a resolution last year. Egypt looks forward to actively participating in all stages of discussions of the feasibility of this treaty and others — such as the proposals concerning cluster munitions — which we believe will not enjoy enough support if not conducted with full transparency in the multilateral context of the United Nations.

The Secretary-General has attached particular importance to revitalizing and activating the disarmament and non-proliferation agenda. Accordingly, the Department for Disarmament Affairs has been restructured and a High Representative has been appointed to take up this task. We welcome this development and support it. We welcome Ambassador Duarte, the High Representative of the Secretary-General, and wish him all success in this difficult task.

Restructuring the Department for Disarmament Affairs should lead to enhancing the ability to present substantive proposals to member States aimed at activating the effective dealing of the international community with the disarmament agenda, in particular nuclear disarmament. We look forward to receiving

substantive proposals from the Secretary-General on strengthening the role of the High Representative in fulfilment of that goal.

Mr. Abdul Razak (Malaysia): On behalf of the delegation of Malaysia, I wish to extend warmest congratulations and felicitations to you, Sir, on your assumption of the chairmanship of the First Committee at the sixty-second session of the General Assembly. We are convinced that your experience, knowledge and leadership will be essential in steering our work forward. My delegation stands ready to cooperate with you and other delegations.

My delegation also wishes to extend its happiest congratulations to Ambassador Sergio Duarte on his appointment as the Secretary-General's High Representative for Disarmament Affairs.

Malaysia is of the view that the work of the Committee carries special importance. Its decisions indicate to the larger audiences outside our meeting room today our commitment to the disarmament and international security agenda.

At the outset, my delegation wishes to associate itself with the statement made by Indonesia on behalf of the Non-Aligned Movement and the statement to be made by Myanmar on behalf of the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN).

Malaysia reaffirms that our work should be aimed at achieving the objective of complete and general disarmament through the multilateral approach. While we acknowledge that non-proliferation and disarmament are mutually reinforcing processes, my delegation is concerned that progress made on non-proliferation is not matched by parallel commitments on disarmament, particularly nuclear disarmament.

Malaysia remains convinced that the possession of nuclear weapons by some States continues to fuel the desire in other States to acquire or possess such weapons themselves. In this regard, we are also deeply concerned that certain nuclear-weapon States are considering making further qualitative improvements to their nuclear arsenals, as well as strengthening nuclear-based defence doctrines and strategies.

At the same time, while there is no commensurate progress on nuclear disarmament, there is an increasing tendency by some to focus on strengthening non-proliferation measures. This status quo, whereby

more effort and attention are focused on nuclear non-proliferation, while progress, or lack thereof, in disarmament is obscure, cannot be sustained.

Both issues need to be addressed simultaneously and in parallel, as a loss of balance in implementing the disarmament and non-proliferation objectives of the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty (NPT) will only undermine the confidence of non-nuclear-weapon States in the underlying original bargain of the Treaty, leading down a dangerous path of uncertainty, which is hardly encouraging as we set out on a new cycle to build towards a successful NPT Review Conference in 2010.

My delegation remains hopeful that the nuclear-weapon States will be able to translate their own expressions of serious concern over the proliferation of nuclear weapons into effectively addressing the issue by demonstrating the necessary political will needed to make headway and progress in nuclear disarmament.

In this connection, my delegation recalls that at the 2000 NPT Review Conference the nuclear-weapon States parties unequivocally undertook to accomplish the total elimination of their nuclear arsenals, leading to nuclear disarmament in accordance with the provisions of article VI of the Treaty. Towards this end, my delegation views the provision of negative security assurances as an important and achievable step towards nuclear disarmament.

On a similar note, a practical and achievable way to address the issue of negative security assurances is through the establishment of nuclear-weapon-free zones. At the regional level, Malaysia became a party to the Southeast Asia Nuclear-Weapon-Free Zone Treaty (SEANWFZ) in December 1995. Malaysia urges the nuclear-weapon States to become parties to the protocol of that Treaty as soon as possible.

Malaysia believes in the establishment of such zones as a platform for the promotion of regional disarmament that could enhance the security of all States and ultimately contribute to international peace and security.

In this regard, Malaysia laments the fact that a nuclear-weapon-free zone is yet to be established in the Middle East, and my delegation joins the call for the establishment of a nuclear-weapon-free zone in that region without delay. The adoption of the resolution on the Middle East at the 1995 NPT Review and Extension Conference was an essential component of the bargain struck at the Conference, which contributed

to the decision of States parties on the indefinite extension of the Treaty.

In this context, Malaysia reiterates the call on Israel, the only non-signatory of the NPT in the Middle East, to immediately accede to the Treaty, which would be an important confidence-building measure and would significantly contribute to enhancing peace and security in the Middle East.

Pending Israel's accession to the Treaty, Malaysia calls upon the nuclear-weapon States to immediately and unconditionally halt the transfer of relevant nuclear weapons, materials, goods and technology to that country. Malaysia is of the view that such cases of a non-party being accorded preferential treatment compared with States parties is a gross violation of the spirit and letter of the Treaty. Only those developing non-nuclear-weapon States that have forsworn nuclear weapons deserve to be accorded preferential treatment in accessing nuclear equipment, material and technology over non-States parties.

Malaysia urges the three non-signatory States that remain outside the NPT to accede to the Treaty as non-nuclear-weapon States, with a view to achieving the universality of the NPT.

While the strengthening of existing nuclear-weapon-free zones and the establishment of new zones represents a positive step towards attaining the objective of global nuclear disarmament, such steps are not the main prescription for achieving that goal. The total elimination of nuclear weapons is the only prescription and guarantee against their use or threat of use and their proliferation.

To signify Malaysia's commitment to achieving nuclear disarmament, Malaysia will for the eleventh consecutive year introduce the draft resolution entitled "Follow-up to the advisory opinion of the International Court of Justice on the *Legality of the Threat or Use of Nuclear Weapons*", which in a sense underscores the unanimous conclusion of the Court that there exists an obligation to pursue in good faith and bring to a conclusion negotiations leading to nuclear disarmament in all its aspects under strict and effective international control.

The threat posed by other weapons of mass destruction should also be of concern to us. In this regard, Malaysia calls for the prohibition and total elimination of all other types of weapons of mass destruction, including biological and chemical weapons. Malaysia fully supports the universal

implementation of and adherence to both the Chemical Weapons Convention (CWC) and the Biological Weapons Convention (BWC), which will contribute significantly towards the achievement of general and complete disarmament.

This year we commemorated the tenth anniversary of the entry into force of the Chemical Weapons Convention, which by all accounts is a success, as it is the first multilateral instrument that provides for the comprehensive and verifiable prohibition of a whole category of weapons of mass destruction. The compliance and verification provisions of the CWC are a significant achievement of multilateral negotiations for disarmament.

In line with this, Malaysia believes that effective verification measures should also be put in place to strengthen the Biological Weapons Convention.

While the provision of verification is vital, we should also promote international cooperation through the transfer of technology, materials and equipment for peaceful purposes in the chemical and biological fields, particularly to developing countries.

Since 1997 the Conference on Disarmament has not been able to reach agreement on its annual programme of work. Despite that, Malaysia remains hopeful that the Conference on Disarmament will be able to find a way to overcome the current impasse and rightfully pursue its work as the sole multilateral negotiating forum on disarmament.

Malaysia is also concerned about the proliferation and excessive accumulation of conventional weapons and how the destructive power of the blast from an anti-personnel mine or a shotgun may feel in comparison with the destructive power unleashed by the splitting of the atom or the fallout from chemical agents. The suffering and pain experienced by victims of landmines or small arms attacks are real enough. They can also cause grave damage to the economic development of poor communities and countries.

Malaysia completely destroyed its stockpile of anti-personnel mines in January 2001, making it the first country in Asia to do so. Malaysia supports international humanitarian efforts to ban anti-personnel mines. In this regard, we call on countries, particularly in South-East Asia, to become parties to the Ottawa Convention.

Malaysia also supports efforts to prevent, combat and eradicate the illicit trade in small arms and light weapons in all its aspects. Domestically, Malaysia has

put in place adequate and stringent laws, administrative procedures and regulations for the effective control of the production of small arms and light weapons, as well as of the export, import, transit and re-transfer of such weapons, in order to prevent illegal manufacture and illicit trafficking or their illegal diversion to unauthorized use.

In conclusion, I congratulate you, Sir, once again on your election and underline my delegation's readiness to work with you, with a view to achieving a positive and successful outcome of this session of the First Committee, in the hope that ultimately our work here will contribute towards the achievement of general and complete disarmament.

Mr. Tarui (Japan): First, allow me to express my congratulations to you, Sir, on your assumption of the chairmanship of the First Committee. I am confident that with the benefit of your wealth of diplomatic experience and skill you will be able to steer us smoothly through this session's deliberations. I assure you of my delegation's full support as you carry out this vital task.

After some disappointing years, the fields of disarmament and non-proliferation seem to have finally come into bud. In 2005 and 2006 no substantive consensus document was achieved, especially at the three major multilateral conferences. However, the tide seems to have turned in favour of disarmament and non-proliferation.

In December last year the Sixth Review Conference of the Biological and Toxin Weapons Convention (BTWC) concluded successfully. We agreed in its Final Document on a number of substantial issues, including the intersessional activities and the establishment of the Implementation Support Unit.

The momentum developed in the Conference on Disarmament last year was carried through and further intensified during this year's session. This year the Conference on Disarmament came close to reaching consensus on its programme of work, tabled as document CD/2007/L.1, which would initiate negotiations on a fissile material cut-off treaty (FMCT) as well as deepen discussions on the other core agenda items. The Conference must quickly adopt its programme of work and start negotiations on an FMCT once it reconvenes in 2008, in order to regain its original mandate as the single multilateral disarmament negotiating forum of the international community.

In May the first session of the Preparatory Committee for the 2010 NPT Review Conference, chaired by Mr. Yukiya Amano, Ambassador of Japan to the international organizations in Vienna, successfully completed its work, despite some delay over the adoption of the agenda and in the commencement of substantive debates. What made the meeting a success was that discussions took place in a considerably improved atmosphere, bearing in mind the acrimony that surrounded the 2005 NPT Review Conference. The second session of the Preparatory Committee is scheduled for April next year in Geneva, and we hope that States parties can utilize the improved conditions that followed the first Preparatory Committee session to make further substantial progress towards a productive 2010 Review Conference.

The establishment of a group of governmental experts to meet on an arms trade treaty next year has been agreed. The uncontrolled spread of conventional arms is causing many victims in conflicts. An arms trade treaty can ensure the responsible transfer of conventional weapons and prevent and stop the occurrence of victims caused by illicit conventional weapons.

As an original co-sponsor country of the resolution for the arms trade treaty, Japan was heartened by the enthusiastic response of Member States and the record number of Governments that submitted their views on an arms trade treaty to the Secretary-General. Japan intends to do its utmost to keep up the momentum of discussions on an arms trade treaty.

Overall, we can fairly state that the international community at present has better prospects for the future of disarmament and non-proliferation. Nonetheless, we must not be complacent. The international community is still beset by a number of serious challenges that require our focused attention. As the Foreign Minister of Japan, Mr. Koumura, said in his statement in the general debate on 28 September, the United Nations needs to transform itself from “forum” to “actor”. The First Committee should sustain this current favourable tide and actively address the challenges we face.

One of the most significant challenges for humankind is the total elimination of nuclear weapons, but this has not yet been realized. Some estimates indicate there are 27,000 nuclear weapons in existence on the Earth. That number needs to be drastically

reduced, together with the further de-alerting of such weapons.

Moreover, the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty (CTBT) has not yet entered into force. We must redouble our efforts for its early entry into force. The nuclear test proclaimed by the Democratic People’s Republic of Korea on 9 October last year highlighted the urgent need for this.

As the only country in the world that has suffered nuclear devastation, Japan reiterates its determination to reinforce international efforts for nuclear disarmament, and to this end we will once again submit a draft resolution that maps out concrete measures towards the total elimination of nuclear weapons, such as those I have just mentioned.

Together with Colombia and South Africa, we will also submit a draft resolution on small arms and light weapons.

In the area of conventional weapons, there is the outstanding issue of cluster munitions. Japan is fully aware of the humanitarian concerns they cause. The international community should address the problem effectively by striking a balance between humanitarian concerns and security requirements, involving the major producers and possessors. Based on this view, Japan supports the commencement of negotiations within the framework of the Convention on Certain Conventional Weapons (CCW).

The proliferation risks of weapons of mass destruction — nuclear, biological and chemical — and their means of delivery are considerable. The Comprehensive Safeguards Agreement and the additional protocol need to be universalized and strictly complied with. States are obliged to establish and strengthen export controls, in accordance with Security Council resolution 1540 (2004).

In addition, the Proliferation Security Initiative (PSI) has become an important tool for deterring the illicit transfer of weapons of mass destruction-related materials and technology.

Regional nuclear proliferation risks are still grave and unresolved. Japan expresses deep concern regarding the nuclear test proclaimed by the Democratic People’s Republic of Korea on 9 October last year. While welcoming the recent progress achieved by the Six-Party Talks, we strongly urge the Democratic People’s Republic of Korea to comply promptly with the provisions of Security Council

resolution 1718 (2006), and we appeal to all Member States to fully implement its provisions.

We will continue to actively work towards a peaceful resolution of the nuclear issues within the framework of the Six-Party Talks. We urge the Democratic People's Republic of Korea to take concrete actions according to the recently adopted Second-Phase Actions for the Implementation of the Joint Statement and move steadily towards the full implementation of the Joint Statement of 19 September 2005.

As for Iran's nuclear issues, Japan hopes that Iran will sincerely cooperate with the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) in order to resolve outstanding issues. Iran must also make further efforts to restore the confidence of the international community by responding sincerely to the requirements set forth in the relevant IAEA Board and Security Council resolutions without further delay.

The ever-increasing demand for nuclear energy due to global warming and global energy security has required us to address both the promotion of the peaceful uses of nuclear energy and the prevention of proliferation. One way to meet both requirements is to assure a nuclear fuel supply. A number of proposals, including Japan's own proposal, have been presented, and the IAEA Director General submitted a report based on those proposals in June this year. Japan will continue to take an active part in, and looks forward to, substantive discussions at the IAEA.

Here I would like to restate the importance of disarmament and non-proliferation education, which will allow the international community to proactively cope with these challenges from the grass-roots level. Japan encourages Member States to implement the recommendations in the report of the Secretary-General on the United Nations study on disarmament and non-proliferation education, and to share information with the First Committee on efforts they have been undertaking to this end.

The First Committee needs to tackle all these challenges with a sense of urgency. Additionally, I should like to point out that all these pressing issues need to be grappled with hand in hand with civil society, which has played a significant role in disarmament and non-proliferation. Japan sincerely hopes that the current positive trend will be maintained within the Committee and beyond.

Mr. Aas (Norway): Let me first congratulate you, Mr. Chairman, on assuming your important task and assure you of my delegation's constructive support in the weeks ahead.

I also extend a warm welcome to Ambassador Sergio Duarte in his new capacity as High Representative and head of the Office for Disarmament Affairs. Norway looks forward to working with him and his dedicated staff.

As this session of the First Committee begins, Norway maintains two overarching priorities: first, reducing nuclear dangers; and, secondly, reducing the suffering inflicted by illicit or inhumane conventional weapons.

If we are to reduce nuclear dangers, we must find common ground on both non-proliferation and disarmament. We must curb the spread of nuclear weapons. We must shrink the numbers and the roles of nuclear arsenals in national security strategies. We must ensure that an expansion of nuclear energy is not at the expense of the non-proliferation regime and international peace and security. We must accept that reducing nuclear dangers entails responsibilities for all States.

If we are to reduce suffering inflicted by certain conventional weapons, we must reconcile legitimate sovereignty and security concerns with humanitarian concerns. We must do both.

My Government's specific positions on most of the issues to be discussed at this year's session will be outlined during the thematic debates next week. Allow me now to focus on some central aspects of the two priorities I have mentioned.

First, we must not abandon a comprehensive nuclear disarmament agenda. My Government welcomes ongoing reductions in nuclear arsenals. We hope and expect that the Strategic Arms Reduction Treaty (START) will be strengthened following its expiration in 2009. The same should be said for the Strategic Offensive Reductions Treaty (SORT), due to expire in 2012.

But reductions alone, welcome as they are, do not fulfil the vision shared by so many of us of a world free of nuclear weapons. We urge the nuclear-weapon States to consider a higher degree of de-alerting, extended space between weapons and means of delivery, and legal bans on both nuclear testing and the production of weapons-grade fissile material.

At the same time, non-nuclear-weapon States cannot and must not be mere observers or *demandeurs*. Norway, for its part, provides considerable funding for the dismantlement of nuclear submarines and for securing nuclear and radioactive materials.

Non-nuclear-weapon States can make other important contributions, such as ratifying the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) additional protocol. In addressing regional security concerns, and in working with nuclear-weapon States to promote transparency, non-nuclear-weapon States can facilitate progress towards nuclear disarmament.

Secondly, we must be vigilant against terrorists who would use weapons of mass destruction to harm and kill innocent civilians. Preventing an act of nuclear terrorism, in particular, has correctly become a top global priority. My Government has focused on minimizing the use of highly enriched uranium in the civilian sector. Again, a variety of preventive measures are imperative, from ratifying and adhering to a range of international conventions and Security Council resolutions to capacity-building and combating the illicit trade in nuclear materials. The bottom line is that preventing nuclear terrorism requires broad and sustained international cooperation.

Thirdly, we must move towards cooperative international agreements for the reliable supply of nuclear fuel. The right to the peaceful use of nuclear technology can be realized without establishing facilities for fuel production. The challenge is to develop a secure, predictable, reliable and affordable system for the supply of nuclear fuel. We fully support the efforts of the IAEA, as we consider this issue to be of the utmost strategic and economic importance. Its consequences for non-proliferation and disarmament cannot be overstated.

Fourthly, and particularly under a most welcome African chairmanship, we must own up to our responsibility to protect innocent civilians from illicit and inhumane conventional weapons. My Government hopes that all stakeholders will be active in reaching a prohibition on cluster munitions, which inflict unacceptable human suffering.

I also reiterate Norway's support for establishing a legally binding arms trade treaty. We are prepared to contribute actively to the work of the Group of Governmental Experts to explore relevant issues.

Last year in this very Committee the nuclear test carried out by the Democratic People's Republic of Korea was condemned. This year we all welcome the real prospect of a denuclearized Korean Peninsula. This demonstrates what diplomacy at its best can achieve.

Today, key outstanding questions about Iran's nuclear activities remain unanswered. We face new tensions over the development of missile defences. The question of possible civilian nuclear cooperation with non-State-parties to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT) is also controversial.

My Government firmly believes in the potential of informed and committed diplomacy to resolve even these most challenging of problems. In this respect, the United Nations has a crucial role to play.

The Committee is intended to address issues of global concern. Yet in recent years we have struggled to achieve a common understanding of the threats and challenges we face. While there are genuine differences in perceptions of urgency and priority, these are too often exacerbated by divisive, rigid and zero-sum approaches. There is an urgent need to restore international consensus in order to move the international disarmament and non-proliferation agenda forward.

That is, at least in part, why Norway approached six other nations, all from different regional groupings, to try to redress the failures of the 2005 NPT Review Conference. The seven-nation initiative managed to establish consensus on a number of important disarmament and non-proliferation issues, and members continue to work informally to facilitate a broader consensus.

My Government has also invited prominent researchers and other members of civil society in a variety of countries to contribute to our efforts. We believe that a persistent and well-informed partnership, including government and civil society, is essential to address the complex challenges before us — just as such a partnership was instrumental in successfully negotiating the mine-ban Convention 10 years ago.

Finally, Mr. Chairman, Norway remains, as ever, committed to a constructive dialogue under your leadership.

The meeting rose at 1.05 p.m.