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Sixty-seventh session

First Committee

5th meeting

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Official Records

Chair: Mr. Percaya (Indonesia)

The meeting was called to order at 10.20 a.m.

Agenda items 86 to 102 (continued)

General debate on all disarmament and international security agenda items

Mrs. Aitimova (Kazakhstan) (*spoke in Russian*):
I have the honour to speak on behalf of the member States of the Collective Security Treaty Organization (CSTO), namely, the Republic of Armenia, the Kyrgyz Republic, the Republic of Tajikistan, Turkmenistan, the Russian Federation and the Republic of Kazakhstan.

On behalf of the members of the CSTO, allow me to congratulate you, Sir, on your election to the Chair of the First Committee and to wish you and the members of the Bureau success in your work.

The member States of the CSTO are in favour of strengthening the existing multilateral disarmament, non-proliferation and arms-control mechanisms. The best international forums for discussing issues of international security and disarmament are the Conference on Disarmament, the First Committee of the General Assembly and the Disarmament Commission, which have made a significant contribution to the processes of disarmament, strengthening the non-proliferation regime and maintaining international peace and security. We welcome the international community's increased attention to questions of international security, disarmament and non-proliferation, and we commend the efforts of the Secretary-General in this area.

In our view, the priorities include equal and indivisible security for all States as one of the conditions for further progress towards nuclear disarmament and strengthening non-proliferation regimes; support for the process of creating zones free of weapons of mass destruction in various regions of the world; the provision of and compliance with security assurances for non-nuclear States; effective measures to prevent the emergence of new types and new systems of weapons of mass destruction; and dealing with problems such as the unilateral and unbridled development of global missile-shield systems and the reluctance to rule out the possibility of deploying weapons in outer space.

We reiterate our firm support for the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT) and welcome multilateral efforts to strengthen it, including within the framework of the new NPT review process, which gained positive momentum from the first session of the Preparatory Committee, held in Vienna in April and May. We support strengthening the safeguards system of the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA), including through the universalization of the additional protocol to the IAEA safeguards agreement.

We believe that one of the important measures for strengthening the nuclear non-proliferation and disarmament regime should be the early entry into force of the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty (CTBT). We call on all States that have not yet done so, especially those whose signing and ratification of the Treaty are essential to its entry into force, to follow our example and sign and/or ratify the CTBT without further delay and without preconditions.

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In order to implement resolution 64/35, which declared 29 August as the International Day against Nuclear Tests, the CSTO member States every year hold events designed to remind the world of the terrible consequences of nuclear testing and to prevent their recurrence in the future. We call on other States Members of the United Nations to support such efforts.

We are convinced of the need to draw up as quickly as possible a treaty banning the production of fissile material for nuclear weapons or other nuclear explosive devices, within the framework of a balanced programme of work of the Conference on Disarmament. We note the important role of nuclear-weapon-free zones in the process of strengthening nuclear non-proliferation and disarmament. We continue to contribute to the process of achieving the effective functioning of existing zones and to creating new ones free of weapons of mass destruction. A significant step will be the prompt signing by the five nuclear-weapon States of a protocol providing negative security assurances for the members of the Central Asia Nuclear Weapon-Free Zone.

We emphasize the importance of opening substantive talks on drawing up a legally binding agreement on preventing the placement of weapons in outer space, based on the 2008 Russian-Chinese draft treaty.

We regret that Member States were unable to reach consensus at the Conference on the Arms Trade Treaty. We are ready to continue to work to that end, with the aim of formulating, on the basis of consensus, a document designed to deal with the most urgent problems related to transfers of conventional weapons that would respond to the interests of every Member State, without exception.

We call for strengthening the role of the existing multilateral forums in the area of international security and disarmament. Only in the framework of those forums, with the widest possible engagement in these processes by the members of the international community, can we arrive at universal and vital decisions, adapted to the challenges and threats in the field of security today.

Ms. Al-Adhammi (Iraq) (*spoke in Arabic*): Like others before me, I would like to congratulate you, Sir, on your election to the Chair of the First Committee. We are confident that your experience will enable us to achieve the positive results to which we all aspire.

My delegation associates itself with the statements delivered at the 2nd meeting by the representative of Iran, on behalf of the members of the Non-Aligned Movement, and by the representative of Egypt, on behalf of the Arab Group.

My Government strongly believes in the responsibility and need to respect and implement disarmament and non-proliferation conventions and treaties. We also affirm our respect for international arrangements relating to disarmament, arms control and non-proliferation. My Government has taken several steps aimed at restoring the role of Iraq, regionally and internationally, which culminated on 15 December 2010 with the adoption of Security Council resolution 1957 (2010), lifting all the sanctions that had been imposed on Iraq in the area of disarmament.

Today I am pleased to inform the Committee that the Iraqi Government has enacted law (48) 2012, establishing a national monitoring board for preventing the proliferation of nuclear, chemical and biological weapons. That step was taken within the framework of Iraq's implementation of one of the obligations under article VII of the Chemical Weapons Convention and Security Council resolution 1957 (2010). Moreover, the Iraqi Council of Representatives has approved the model additional protocol to the comprehensive safeguards agreement of the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA). That approval was ratified by the President of the Republic of Iraq, noting that Iraq has voluntarily implemented the protocol since 17 February 2010. Iraq also signed the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty, in August 2008, and it is now before the Council of Representatives for approval.

My Government emphasizes that universal adherence to international conventions relating to weapons of mass destruction, especially nuclear weapons, comprehensive compliance without discrimination and the total elimination of such weapons are considered as basic elements that provide the international community with real guarantees against the use or threat of use of such weapons and are critical to international peace and security.

I would like to point out that negative security assurances are also a key element and an important step towards international peace and security, in addition to being a just and legitimate demand by non-nuclear countries that voluntarily abandoned military nuclear choices by joining the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation

of Nuclear Weapons (NPT). However, that Treaty should not be considered an alternative to the goal of the total elimination of nuclear weapons. My Government calls for continued international efforts to put in place a legally binding instrument to provide safeguards for non-nuclear-weapon States, along with guarantees against the use or threat of use of nuclear weapons by nuclear-weapon States. Such an instrument should also set out means to progress towards that goal, which could provide an incentive for States outside the NPT to join it.

In that context, we affirm Iraq's commitment to the International Court of Justice's advisory opinion, issued on 8 July 1996, on the *Legality of the threat or use of nuclear weapons* (see A/51/218), which emphasizes that the use or threat of use of nuclear weapons contradicts the provisions of international law on armed conflicts and reaffirms the obligation of States to proceed with negotiations resulting in comprehensive nuclear disarmament in all its aspects under strict international monitoring and controls.

My Government calls on the nuclear-weapon States to assume their responsibility to fulfil fully, explicitly and without delay the obligations imposed by article VI of the NPT, in addition to their pledges made at the 1995 NPT Review and Extension Conference and the 2000 Review Conference.

My delegation would like to take this opportunity to stress the legitimate right of States to obtain nuclear technology for peaceful purposes that serve their development projects, support their economies and diversify their energy sources.

The complete elimination of all weapons of mass destruction, especially nuclear weapons, is considered a prerequisite to achieving stability and security in the Middle East, as stated in Security Council resolutions 487 (1981) and 687 (1991) and in the relevant General Assembly resolutions adopted by consensus annually. My delegation also affirms the importance of implementing the recommendations of the 2010 NPT Review Conference, which called for holding an international conference on the establishment of a Middle East zone free of nuclear weapons and all other weapons of mass destruction in 2012, with the participation of all countries of the region, taking as its reference the final document of the 1995 Conference.

We stress the importance of the participation of all countries of the region in the 2012 conference and their

support for regional and international efforts to reach the desired goals. We call on the Secretary-General and the sponsors of the 1995 resolution on the Middle East — the Russian Federation, the United States and the United Kingdom — to closely collaborate with the countries of the region and to make all the necessary preparations for the 2012 conference. We welcome the efforts of the facilitator, Ambassador Jaakko Laajava, and the Government of Finland to host the conference in Helsinki. We also wish to emphasize the importance of Israel acceding to the NPT and subjecting all its nuclear facilities to the comprehensive safeguards system of the IAEA.

On the other hand, my delegation would like to express its disappointment at the failure, during negotiations in July, to reach an agreement on the text of an arms trade treaty, which would have been the first international treaty to regulate trade in conventional weapons. We call for the continuation of efforts, in the light of the broad and common ground that exists, to reach an affective and balanced text that meets the needs and interests of exporting and importing countries alike.

My delegation affirms the importance of continued efforts aimed at implementing the Programme of Action to Prevent, Combat and Eradicate the Illicit Trade in Small Arms and Light Weapons in All Its Aspects, whose adoption by consensus was acknowledged in resolution 56/24 V. The Programme is considered the essential framework for the international community's measures and efforts to prohibit the illicit trade in small arms and light weapons.

At the same time, we emphasize the importance of the voluntary implementation of the International Tracing Instrument and the necessity of providing international support for developing countries to improve their capabilities and enable them to implement the Instrument through identifying and tracing illicit small arms and light weapons in order to eliminate them, as a service to all humankind. In that regard, we welcome the progress made in connection with the Programme of Action to Prevent, Combat and Eradicate the Illicit Trade in Small Arms and Light Weapons in All Its Aspects since its adoption in 2001.

The Conference on Disarmament is the sole negotiation forum in which to discuss disarmament issues. It is very important to respect the regulations of the Conference and its rules of procedure, which are

necessary to the success of any work agreed on. On this occasion, Iraq expresses its hope about the Conference reaching an agreement on its programme of work, overcoming its failure and resuming its substantive work and negotiations according to its mandate.

My country also supports the holding of a fourth special session of the General Assembly devoted to disarmament, which would provide an opportunity to highlight the most important aspects of disarmament from a perspective more consistent with the current world situation. We further urge the international community and public opinion to support the elimination of nuclear weapons and other weapons of mass destruction.

In conclusion, I would like to express my delegation's good wishes for the Committee's success at this session and for us to achieve our desired goals through mutual understanding among Member States about the essential issues.

Mr. Simon-Michel (France) (*spoke in French*): France, of course, joins previous delegations in congratulating you, Sir, on your election as Chair of the First Committee, as well as in extending our best wishes for success in our work together.

France associates itself with the statement delivered at the 2nd meeting, the first day of our deliberations, by the observer of the European Union. I would like to add the following observations from our national perspective.

This past year has seen a certain amount of progress in disarmament and international security, which France welcomes. Following the success of the 2010 Review Conference of the Parties to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons, a new cycle was launched this year in an encouraging manner, with balanced discussions on each of the Treaty's three pillars. The five nuclear-weapon States are actively working on the implementation of the 2010 action plan, which constitutes our common road map. Those States held a first follow-up meeting in Paris in 2011. We then met again in Washington, D.C., in June, with a view to the 2015 Review Conference.

There has also been progress with the question of nuclear-weapon-free zones. The five permanent members of the Security Council stand ready to sign the Protocol to the Treaty of Bangkok, establishing a nuclear-weapon-free zone in South-East Asia. On

17 September, the five nuclear-weapon States adopted a common declaration, in parallel with Mongolia, on Mongolia's nuclear-weapon-free status. The conference on the establishment of a zone free of weapons of mass destruction in the Middle East is also scheduled for this year. France, together with the European Union, is assisting in the preparation for that conference. France is also providing its full support to the facilitator, Mr. Laajava.

Furthermore, I would like to commend the progress that has been made with the ratifications of the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty over the past 12 months, during which six new States have ratified it, including the Chair's country, Indonesia, which is listed in annex 2.

After acceding to the Treaty on the Non-proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT), precisely 20 years ago, France halved its nuclear arsenal and took irreversible measures, such as dismantling its production facilities for fissile material for nuclear weapons. It will continue to respect its nuclear-disarmament commitments. France continues to be fully committed to seeking a safer world for all and to working with all States towards creating the conditions for a world free from nuclear weapons, in accordance with the goals of the NPT and in a manner that promotes international stability and is based on the principle of the undiminished security of all.

Nonetheless, nuclear disarmament, as stated in article VI of the NPT, is just one facet of general and complete disarmament. It cannot be envisaged independently of the other aspects of disarmament and arms control. In that regard, the progress achieved should also be commended. The Review Conference of the Parties to the Biological Weapons Convention finished on a high note in December 2011, with the issuance of a road map to respond in particular to the new challenges that have been created by the development of technologies in that area. The Ottawa Anti-Personnel Mine Ban Convention and, in particular, the Oslo Convention on Cluster Munitions are moving towards universalization.

The United Nations Conference to Review Progress Made in the Implementation of the Programme of Action to Prevent, Combat and Eradicate the Illicit Trade in Small Arms and Light Weapons in All Its Aspects recently adopted by consensus an outcome document that renews States' commitments, although we regret

that the document did not go further, in particular on the issue of man-portable air defence systems. Most important, July found us on the verge of adopting an ambitious arms trade treaty, thanks to the patience, competence and diplomatic skills of the President of the Conference on the Arms Trade Treaty, Roberto García Moritán. We now urgently need to finalize those negotiations, but I will come back to that later.

Finally, my presentation of our work to promote a safer international environment would not be complete without a word about space and the European Union's work to develop an international code of conduct for outer space activities, as well as the work of the group of governmental experts on transparency and confidence-building measures for outer space activities.

However, that progress should not obscure the immense challenges facing us in the coming months. I would like to mention three of them.

The first, unfortunately, is the continuation, and even aggravation, of the crisis of proliferation. Nuclear proliferation threatens everybody's security. It hinders the development of civil nuclear cooperation by undermining confidence. It is also a hindrance to progress in nuclear disarmament. The Iranian nuclear crisis is obviously at the forefront of those crises. The development of the Iranian nuclear programme, carried out in spite of resolutions of the Security Council and the International Atomic Energy Agency's Board of Governors, is a source of serious concern with regard to international peace and security. The international community shares that view and has reiterated it through the adoption of a new resolution on Iran by the Board of Governors on 13 September. We are continuing our efforts to prevail in Iran so that that country will finally comply with its obligations, as we seek a long-term diplomatic solution to that crisis. Furthermore, the complete, verifiable and irreversible dismantlement of the North Korean nuclear and ballistic missile programme is also a priority for the international community, which firmly condemned the rocket launch conducted by the Democratic People's Republic of Korea on 13 April 2011. Last, but not least, light must still be shed on Syria's nuclear activities.

In addition to the nuclear crises, there are new serious concerns with regard to chemical weapons. On 23 July, the Damascus regime publicly acknowledged that it had chemical weapons. That statement is extremely worrying, given the level of violence and the

repeated acts of violence that that regime has committed against its people. The President of the French Republic spoke very clearly to that point at the rostrum of the General Assembly (see A/67/PV.6) just a few days ago. Moreover, just a few months after the third special session of the Conference of States Parties to Review the Operation of the Chemical Weapons Convention, the Syrian crisis demonstrates the importance of the universalization of the Chemical Weapons Convention from the point of view of both disarmament and non-proliferation.

In those same countries, the proliferation of weapons of mass destruction is coupled in no less worrying a manner with new developments concerning their ballistic missile programmes. The Security Council has repeatedly stressed, especially in its resolutions 1540 (2004), 1887 (2009) and 1977 (2011), that the proliferation of missiles capable of delivering weapons of mass destruction constitutes a threat to international peace and security. Huge challenges still lie ahead, even as this year we mark the tenth anniversary of The Hague Code of Conduct and the twenty-fifth anniversary of the Missile Technology Control Regime.

Our second major challenge is the situation in the Conference on Disarmament and the launching of negotiations for a treaty banning the production of fissile material for nuclear weapons. The Conference on Disarmament urgently needs to adopt a programme of work based on document CD/1864, which was adopted by consensus in 2009. The launch of negotiations on a fissile material cut-off treaty is the next logical step in nuclear disarmament. Fissile material is the raw material for those weapons. That negotiation is a matter of priority, as recognized by Security Council resolution 1887 (2009), by action 15 of the action plan adopted by the 2010 Review Conference of the Parties to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons and every year by a General Assembly resolution.

The Conference on Disarmament is the sole multilateral body tasked with negotiating universal treaties on disarmament, and a large number of countries, including mine, value it greatly. It has many successes to its credit, such as the Chemical Weapons Convention and the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty, to name but the most recent. The current situation, which has been created by opposition from just one country, is understandably frustrating, foremost for my own country. Many and varied ideas have been put forward as to how to overcome that deadlock,

yet the Conference on Disarmament's expertise and characteristics, especially the consensus rule and the participation of all States with key capacities in the nuclear field, also guarantee that the agreements it negotiates will be truly universal and will make a real contribution to international security. We need to take that into account if we are to avoid finding ourselves in an impasse.

The third major challenge that I would like to raise is the arms trade treaty. An ambitious treaty was within our reach at the United Nations Conference on the Arms Trade Treaty in July. We urgently need to conclude those negotiations in the coming months on the strength of July's achievements, basing our work on the document submitted by the President on 26 July. Given the repercussions of the globalization in the area of the arms trade, the international community needs a foundation of shared legally binding rules to regulate the legitimate arms trade and to prevent illicit trafficking. Such a treaty needs to cover all types of transfers and all types of conventional arms, including small arms and light weapons and their ammunition and components. Of all the major projects for which we are responsible, the arms trade treaty would probably generate the most immediate benefits in terms of international security, humanitarian impact and combating terrorism and organized crime. I hope that progress in that area can serve as a model of the efficient multilateralism that France has been calling for and a demonstration that the United Nations is able to successfully conduct universal negotiations by consensus on arms control.

Those are a few thoughts that I wanted to share with the Committee on how France sees the major challenges that we need to meet, according to my country's priorities. I would be pleased to discuss those matters in greater detail in each of the thematic debates.

Mr. Srivali (Thailand): Allow me, first, to congratulate you, Mr. Chair, on your assumption of the chairmanship of the First Committee of the General Assembly at its sixty-seventh session. I am confident that under your able leadership and guidance, our work will be successful. My congratulations also go to all members of the Bureau.

Thailand associates itself with the statements made at the Committee's 2nd meeting by the representative of the Islamic Republic of Iran, on behalf of the Non-Aligned Movement, and by the representative of

Myanmar, on behalf of the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN).

Time and again, history has taught us that lasting peace can never be achieved by waging war. International security is best guaranteed by strengthening global cooperation, not by stockpiling and using weapons. Thailand therefore sees disarmament as a fundamental answer to effectively reducing threats to peace and the risks posed by the proliferation of weapons of mass destruction and conventional arms. By seeking the dismantling and control of weapons capable of mass destruction and those often used by human rights abusers, the work of the Committee is vital in promoting the theme of the sixty-seventh session of the General Assembly, that is, "Bringing about adjustment or settlement of international disputes or situations by peaceful means".

Thailand is fully committed to supporting the process of disarmament and non-proliferation of all types of weapons of mass destruction. We have joined all key international treaties and conventions and have complied with all obligations and commitments under those instruments, as well as with the relevant Security Council resolutions. In March, at the Seoul Nuclear Security Summit, Thai Prime Minister Yingluck Shinawatra expressed Thailand's commitment to global nuclear security and announced Thailand's contribution to such efforts by offering a venue for one of the sherpa meetings, which is now scheduled for January 2014 in preparation for the next Nuclear Security Summit, to be held at The Hague.

Thailand commends the Secretary-General's initiative to convene the high-level meeting on countering nuclear terrorism, held on 28 September in New York. The meeting was timely and relevant given the precarious times we live in. We welcome the outcome of the April and May meetings of the Preparatory Committee for the 2015 Review Conference of the Parties to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons, as reflected in the Chairman's factual summary. We look forward to the commencement of negotiations on a treaty banning the production of fissile materials, as well as a nuclear-weapons convention, to be held in an inclusive format. We support unequivocal and legally binding security assurances to non-nuclear-weapon States, which would help strengthen the nuclear disarmament and non-proliferation regime. We also urge all States parties to the Treaty to resolutely

fulfil their respective obligations under the Treaty in a transparent, verifiable and irreversible manner.

As an active proponent of the Treaty on the South-East Asia Nuclear-Weapon-Free Zone, Thailand supports the creation of nuclear-weapon-free zones globally. We welcome the conference on the establishment of a Middle East zone free of nuclear weapons and all other weapons of mass destruction, to be held in Helsinki in December. We also welcome the co-sponsorship by the Security Council's five permanent members of the draft resolution on the South-East Asia Nuclear Weapon-Free-Zone last year and hope to build on that momentum. In that connection, we urge nuclear-weapon States to sign the protocol to the Treaty as early as possible.

As important as nuclear security is, nuclear safety is no less deserving of our attention. Thailand commends the role of the International Atomic Energy Agency as the sole international verification body, and calls upon all Member States to fully cooperate with the Agency. As a member of the Board of Governors, Thailand looks forward to working closely with the international community on enhancing global nuclear safety, security and safeguards. We also wish to inform the Committee that the Thai delegation, led by our Minister for Science and Technology, will participate in the upcoming Fukushima Ministerial Conference on Nuclear Safety, to be held in December.

At the regional level, Thailand has initiated the establishment of the ASEAN Network of Nuclear Regulatory Bodies or Relevant Authorities with the objective of enhancing regulatory activities and further strengthening nuclear safety, security and safeguards in the ASEAN region. The Network was welcomed by ASEAN leaders at the twentieth ASEAN Summit, held in Phnom Penh in April, and it is expected that the Network will be established by the end of this year. The Network would also support and contribute to the purposes of ASEAN in preserving South-East Asia as a nuclear-weapon-free zone.

The Chemical Weapons Convention (CWC) and the Biological Weapons Convention (BWC) are also key international instruments to combat proliferation of weapons of mass destruction. Thailand supports universal adherence to, and the strict implementation of, those Conventions, particularly the complete destruction of chemical weapons and the strengthening of confidence-building measures under the BWC.

As this year marks the fifteenth anniversary of the entry into force of the CWC, Thailand welcomes the recent high-level meeting of the Organization for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons and urges States that are not yet parties to the Convention to accede to it as soon as possible. We look forward to fully and positively participating in the upcoming third special session of the Conference of States Parties to Review the Operation of the Chemical Weapons Convention, to be convened in April 2013. Additionally, we support the outcome of the seventh Review Conference of the Biological Weapons Convention, held in December 2011. Thailand also looks forward to working closely with other BWC States parties to further strengthen the BWC and promote its full and effective implementation.

The proliferation of small arms and light weapons remains a serious threat to peace, security, stability and development in various parts of the world, as they are much more common and widespread than weapons of mass destruction. When linked with transnational crimes and terrorism, they continue to inflict extensive loss of life and limb on countless innocent victims across the world.

Thailand supports the Programme of Action to Prevent, Combat and Eradicate the Illicit Trade in Small Arms and Light Weapons in All Its Aspects as a key multilateral framework to curb the proliferation of small arms and light weapons. We commend the hard work and successful conclusion of the second Review Conference of the United Nations Programme of Action on Small Arms, held in New York from 27 August to 7 September, which provides vital momentum to arms-control activities. We note that adequate resources and assistance are essential to the implementation of the Programme of Action. We pledge our full support to implement the Programme, as illicit small arms and light weapons have disproportionately affected innocent civilians, particularly vulnerable groups.

On that note, we wish to commend the work of the United Nations Regional Centre for Peace and Disarmament for Asia and the Pacific in providing substantive support to initiatives and activities promoting the implementation of measures for peace and disarmament in Asia and the Pacific region. In particular, we would like to express our appreciation to the Centre for supporting our initiative to organize the upcoming workshop entitled "Building capacity and overcoming language barriers in small arms and light weapons control," scheduled to be held from 11 to 15 October 2012.

13 December in Bangkok. In that regard, we urge the Centre to maintain its active role and, at the same time, we encourage all States in the region to further enhance their close cooperation with the Centre in order to further promote regional peace and disarmament efforts.

It is regrettable that the United Nations Conference on the Arms Trade Treaty, held in July in New York, did not reach a successful conclusion. However, the Thai delegation is not disheartened. We remain committed and supportive of the arms trade treaty process — an important treaty that we believe will help control the illicit transfer of conventional weapons and minimize the social and humanitarian impacts of such transfers. In that connection, Thailand hopes to see a way forward on the matter, and we hope that the arms trade treaty will be successfully concluded in the near future.

As the sole multilateral disarmament negotiating body, the Conference on Disarmament (CD) has long played an important role in advancing global disarmament and promoting international peace and security. For more than a decade, however, the CD has struggled to make progress in its substantive work. The high-level meeting on revitalizing the work of the Conference on Disarmament in 2010 gave much-needed political impetus to the substantive work of the CD. Yet, it required the strong political will of Member States to achieve the much needed results. In addition, as disarmament involves the security of all countries, all States should have the right to participate in the discussion and negotiating process on an equal basis. As the first coordinator and an active member of the informal group of the observer States to the Conference on Disarmament, Thailand firmly believes that the CD must engage all stakeholders and reaffirms its call for expansion of membership of the CD.

On a final note, Thailand firmly believes that peace and security are goals that every nation strives for. Even though the road may be arduous, the end result is worth the struggle. Progress in multilateral negotiations may be slow and not easily achieved, but the alternative is too bleak to contemplate. For the sake of present and future generations, my delegation will continue to work with all Member States so that together we may build a world of lasting peace and security.

Mrs. Ataeva (Turkmenistan) (*spoke in Russian*): Allow me to congratulate you, Sir, on your election as Chair of the First Committee. I also congratulate the

other members of the Bureau on their elections. Let me assure you that we will support you in your efforts to achieve successful results during this session.

Ensuring security in the area of disarmament and the non-proliferation of weapons of mass destruction is one of today's most relevant issues. Facilitating the disarmament process, reducing arms arsenals, particularly nuclear-weapons arsenals, and joint efforts to combat the proliferation of such weapons have been key topics on the international agenda over the past decade. Turkmenistan, which participates actively and consistently in efforts to find lasting solutions to key issues of global importance, sees disarmament as one of its main foreign policy priorities. Declaring its commitment to cooperate resolutely on the processes of disarmament and non-proliferation, our State, in accordance with its neutral status, has sought to undertake structured and specific activities in that area.

Since gaining independence, Turkmenistan has affirmed its commitment to supporting the international community's efforts to maintain nuclear security and to prevent the threat of the unbridled proliferation of weapons of mass destruction. To that end, in 1994, our State acceded to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons, and in 1998, we became a party to the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty.

At the regional level, Turkmenistan has called for the establishment of multilateral assistance mechanisms among the States of Central Asia and the Caspian region, which is an integral historical region that today hosts very important transport, energy and communications routes. In our view, the issue of disarmament should be one of the priorities for joint activities with the United Nations.

On 24 June 2010, with the support of the United Nations, we hosted an international conference in Ashgabat on disarmament issues in Central Asia and the Caspian Basin. The conference concluded, inter alia, that challenges to the non-proliferation regime and the disarmament process should be addressed within the existing international legal machinery, which must, in our view, be complemented by new instruments and forms of multilateral cooperation.

Having set the strengthening of good-neighbourly relations and cooperation as priorities of its foreign policy, our country proposes the establishment of a platform for multilateral political dialogue, with the participation of the States in the region, neighbouring

countries and other international bodies, with a view to developing mutually acceptable approaches to the most important issues affecting the current and future development of Central Asia and the Caspian region. We propose that a first step towards establishing such a mechanism could be the convening of a meeting on peace and security in Central Asia and the Caspian region in Ashgabat in 2013.

Our country is ready to cooperate actively with the Office of the High Representative for Disarmament Affairs and to host a number of initiatives to that end. One practical measure aimed at implementing consistent action in the area of disarmament could be the further improvement of the relevant United Nations structures. In that context, our country has proposed the establishment of a United Nations subregional centre for disarmament in Asia.

An important milestone in stepping up cooperation on disarmament and the non-proliferation of weapons of mass destruction among States at the regional level was the signing of the Treaty on a Nuclear-Weapon-Free Zone in Central Asia by Turkmenistan, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan and Uzbekistan in Semipalatinsk on 8 September 2006. In becoming parties to the Treaty, the five States in the Central Asia region committed to banning the production, acquisition and deployment of nuclear weapons, their components and related nuclear devices on their territories.

The parties to the Treaty affirmed their joint contribution to efforts to ensure regional and global security and to the nuclear disarmament and non-proliferation processes. That is particularly relevant in the context of joint activities to combat terrorism and prevent weapons of mass destruction from falling into the hands of terrorist groups. In many ways, the Treaty on a Nuclear-Weapon-Free Zone in Central Asia is a unique instrument that has established an international legal basis for the emergence of a large nuclear-weapon-free region on the Asian continent.

In that connection, our State also supports the prompt establishment of a nuclear-weapon-free zone in the Middle East.

Our efforts are aimed at establishing a robust and effective system of regional security and stability in Central Asia and the Caspian region. We are also committed to the peaceful settlement of disputes on the basis of mutual understanding, trust and transparency and an objective discussion of all pressing issues.

Mr. Ulyanov (Russian Federation) (*spoke in Russian*): I would first of all like to congratulate you, Sir, on your election as Chair of the First Committee and to wish you and all those present success in the difficult work ahead.

I would like to reaffirm Russia's commitment to the existing United Nations multilateral disarmament machinery, including the Conference on Disarmament, the First Committee and the Disarmament Commission.

We certainly share the international community's concern over the fact that that trio has not made any real contribution to the record of achievements in the field of multilateral disarmament for many years. However, there are serious differences between us and those who believe that that situation is the result of alleged flaws in the United Nations machinery, which, they propose, should be reformed. We fundamentally disagree with such an approach. Attempts at reform could destroy the existing structures, and there is absolutely no guarantee that such attempts at reform would help to build something new or more efficient than the existing trio.

It is clear to us that the cause of the stalemate in the disarmament process is political factors linked to the environment of strategic uncertainty that has recently characterized international relations. Turbulence instead of stability in international affairs, the widespread practice of double standards and the resort to aggressive acts in bypassing the Security Council do little to contribute to an atmosphere that is conducive to tangible progress in the field of disarmament. As a result, States' opinions on ways to ensure national, regional and international security and the role of disarmament mechanisms in the process often differ substantially. No organizational innovation can resolve that problem. What is needed is a determined, meticulous effort to define common interests in our positions and dialogue based on mutual respect.

In that regard, the Russian Federation calls upon all States to adopt a pragmatic approach without excessive political ambition, aimed at tackling the agenda of the Conference on Disarmament in order to agree on the simultaneous start of substantive work on all four key agenda items, through working groups with a mandate for discussion. Such a practical solution could be achieved in the upcoming session of the Conference. It would allow us to break the deadlock and would pave the way to more serious steps in future. The question is: which will prevail — ambition or pragmatism?

The future success of the review process of the Treaty on the Non-proliferation of Nuclear Weapons must be ensured. In that respect, one of the most important tasks is to work towards the convening, this year, of a conference on the establishment of a zone free of weapons of mass destruction and their means of delivery in the Middle East. We, together with the United States of America, the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland and the Secretary-General, were given instructions to that effect at the 2010 NPT Review Conference.

Much work has already been carried out. Russia, together with other organizers, is working to address organizational matters and determine the agenda for the conference. We call for the taking of decisions by consensus. The countries of the region should primarily reaffirm their political will to establish the nuclear-weapon-free zone and demonstrate their ability to come to an agreement. They alone will be able to resolve those issues. A crucial task is to ensure the participation in the conference of all States of the Middle East region. We again urge the countries that have not yet done so to confirm their participation in that major event.

We also emphasize the importance of the establishment of a nuclear-weapon-free zone in Central Asia. Consultations must be deepened with the aim of urging the nuclear-weapon States to sign the protocol to the Treaty as soon as possible. We also trust that the protocol on the establishment of a nuclear-weapon-free zone in South-East Asia will soon be signed. All of the necessary preparatory work has already been completed.

Among the few significant arms control achievements of the past decade was the signing, entry into force and initial implementation of the Treaty between the United States of America and the Russian Federation on Strategic Offensive Reductions. Some people have said that it was not enough. However, Russia and the United States have, in fact, done everything possible to date in the field of strategic offensive arms. Our current task is to fully meet the commitments envisaged in the Treaty. The signing of the Treaty has raised hopes for an early agreement on further steps in the field of nuclear disarmament. In sharing aspirations to achieve a nuclear-free world, Russia understands and welcomes such expectations. In reality, however, the prospects for any new agreements are becoming increasingly illusory.

Strategic stability is affected by tectonic shifts caused by the hasty implementation of unilateral plans to develop a global ballistic missile defence (BMD) system. In essence, we can state that that involves an attempt to ensure one's own security at the expense of the security of others and in contravention of the fundamental principles of European and international security. Not all States are aware of the pernicious consequences of such steps — as can be seen also in discussions in the First Committee — but the trend exists and may soon dash any hopes for moving the disarmament process forward. That is the practical reality. Moreover, the unilateral deployment of BMD systems without limitation or regard for the international consequences of such actions and the legitimate interests of other States will inevitably entail countermeasures, thereby creating dangerous conditions for confrontation and a possible new round of the arms race. Our leading priority is to prevent such developments.

We consider the challenge of missile proliferation to be a global matter, such that possible responses to the issue must be addressed jointly. One way to respond could be through ballistic missile defence. However, such a system must reflect the character of real, rather than imagined, threats. It must also avoid leading to any greater inequality in international relations. While each country or group of countries has the right to choose the most effective ways to ensure its security, such efforts must not harm a neighbouring State's security. The Russian Federation remains open to dialogue on ballistic missile defence. The joint development of an unbiased missile defence architecture must be made a matter of priority.

In conclusion, I would like to make a few comments on another matter of priority for our delegation, namely, the prevention of an arms race in outer space. We believe the issue to be extremely relevant, and we are ready to discuss it in the Conference on Disarmament. As a first step towards concluding a treaty on the matter, the Russian Federation and China submitted a draft treaty to the Conference a few years ago. Therefore, a further step towards concluding such a treaty would be to call on all countries to follow the example of Russia and other Collective Security Treaty Organization member States, by assuming the obligation not to become the first to place weapons in outer space.

We call on all of our colleagues and partners to make collective, progressive and sustained efforts to

create a favourable environment for further progress in multilateral disarmament. The Russian Federation is ready for that task, including during the current session of the First Committee.

Mr. Advani (India): Please accept my delegation's congratulations, Sir, on your well-deserved election as Chair of the First Committee. We are delighted that a representative of Indonesia is chairing the First Committee this year. I assure you of my delegation's full cooperation in pursuing our collective work.

India aligns itself with the statement made at the Committee's 2nd meeting by the representative of Iran, on behalf of the Non-Aligned Movement. It is, however, a painful reality that the goal of universal, non-discriminatory nuclear disarmament remains a distant one. India's action plan of 1988 (see A/S-15/50, annex I), put forward by Shri Rajiv Gandhi at the third special session of the General Assembly devoted to disarmament, set out a road map for achieving nuclear disarmament in a time-bound, universal, non-discriminatory, phased and verifiable manner. The principles contained in that action plan remain relevant and valid, and India's 2006 working paper on nuclear disarmament retained the spirit and substance of the action plan. In order to raise awareness and promote research about global nuclear disarmament, a national conference was held in New Delhi on 21 August for more than 1,000 students and scholars.

We believe that the goal of nuclear disarmament can be achieved by a step-by-step process underwritten by a universal commitment and an agreed multilateral framework that is global and non-discriminatory. There is a need for meaningful dialogue among all States that possess nuclear weapons, aimed at building trust and confidence and at reducing the salience of nuclear weapons in international affairs and security doctrines. India subscribes to a policy of credible minimum nuclear deterrent. We do not subscribe to any arms race, including a nuclear arms race.

India has espoused the policy of no first-use and non-use against non-nuclear-weapon States and is prepared to convert those undertakings into multilateral legal arrangements. We support negotiations with a view to reaching agreement on effective arrangements aimed at assuring non-nuclear-weapon States against the use or threat of use of nuclear weapons. We also support a global no-first-use treaty. India remains committed to maintaining a unilateral and voluntary moratorium

on nuclear explosive testing. We are committed to working with the international community to advance our common objective of non-proliferation, including through strong export controls and membership in the multilateral export regimes.

Without prejudice to the priority we attach to nuclear disarmament, we support the negotiation in the Conference on Disarmament of a non-discriminatory and internationally verifiable treaty banning the production of fissile material for nuclear weapons and other nuclear explosive devices (FMCT) that meets India's national security interests. India is a nuclear-weapon State and a responsible member of the world community, and would approach those negotiations as such. We share the disappointment that the impasse in the Conference on Disarmament has persisted, despite the strong support for the commencement of the FMCT negotiations. We must work towards an early start of those negotiations in the Conference on Disarmament as part of a comprehensive and balanced programme of work and on the basis of the agreed mandate.

The conclusion of the Chemical Weapons Convention demonstrated that, given shared political will, a universally acceptable non-discriminatory disarmament treaty to eliminate comprehensively an entire category of weapons of mass destruction within a specified time frame under effective international verification can be negotiated multilaterally. The High-level meeting on the Chemical Weapons Convention (CWC) was held in New York and addressed by our External Affairs Minister on 1 October. India is fully compliant with its CWC obligations, including the destruction of its chemical weapon stockpiles as prescribed by the Convention. We call on the remaining possessor States to complete the destruction of their chemical stockpiles as soon as possible.

India also welcomes the outcome of the seventh Review Conference of the States parties to the Biological Weapons Convention and hopes that it will allow the States parties to face the new challenges confronting the Convention in the twenty-first century, including bioterrorism. We also welcome the consensus reached on the new intersessional programme, which got off to a good start this year with a meeting of experts focused on international cooperation and assistance, national implementation and a review of scientific and technological developments of relevance to the Convention.

The prevention of an arms race in outer space, including the safety of assets in space, should remain a priority. The international legal framework on space security needs to be strengthened in order to enhance the security of space assets for all space users and prevent the weaponization of outer space. While universal and non-discriminatory transparency and confidence-building measures can play a useful complementary role, they cannot replace legally binding instruments in that field.

India participated in the negotiations on an arms trade treaty held in July. Given the complexities of the issues involved, it was not possible for that conference to adopt an agreed text. We believe that further work needs to be done, and that a treaty of that nature involving legally binding obligations should not be rushed through. It is important to bring all stakeholders on board in a manner that promotes the prospects of a treaty that is practical, implementable and able to attract universal adherence. India is prepared to engage in further work via a consensus-based process towards an outcome. India welcomes the consensus outcome of the second 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.

India will again present its three traditional draft resolutions for action by the First Committee. The draft resolution on a convention on the prohibition of the use of nuclear weapons and the draft resolution on reducing nuclear danger reflect our belief that progressive steps are needed to de-legitimize nuclear weapons and to increase constraints on the use of nuclear weapons before they are eliminated. Measures to reduce nuclear dangers arising from accidental or unauthorized use of nuclear weapons and to de-alert nuclear weapons are essential steps in that regard. As in previous years, we will also present a draft resolution on measures to prevent terrorists from acquiring weapons of mass destruction. The High-level meeting held on 28 September demonstrated that nuclear terrorism remains a priority area for action by the international community. It has been India's consistent position that, without diminishing State accountability for curbing terrorism or its linkages with weapons of mass destruction, the international community must come together to eliminate the risks related to sensitive technologies and materials falling into the hands of terrorists and non-State actors, including through clandestine proliferation networks.

Before I conclude, I wish to address the issue of the disarmament machinery. India has welcomed the Secretary-General's initiative to focus debate on the revitalization of the work of the Conference on Disarmament and on taking forward multilateral negotiations. We have participated in the debates in New York and Geneva on that issue. We believe that the Conference on Disarmament continues to have the mandate, the membership, the credibility and the rules of procedure to discharge its responsibility as the single multilateral negotiating forum. It is up to Member States to make it work by negotiating multilateral treaties that can be implemented universally. Proposals that question the validity or relevance of the Conference on Disarmament and weaken established multilateral negotiating institutions must be viewed with caution.

Mr. Wu Haitao (China) (*spoke in Chinese*): On behalf of the Chinese delegation, please allow me to congratulate you, Sir, upon your election as Chair of the First Committee for this year. With your rich diplomatic experience and wisdom, you will surely guide this session to success. The Chinese delegation assures you and other delegations of its full cooperation.

The international situation is undergoing major and profound changes. Countries have never been so interconnected and interdependent as they are today. To promote peace, development and cooperation has become the common aspiration of the international community. On the other hand, regional turbulence persists, hot spots of tension keep emerging, and traditional and non-traditional security issues have become entwined. The international security environment is getting increasingly complicated.

The international community should foster some new thinking on security, featuring mutual trust, mutual benefit, equality and coordination. It should abandon the outdated Cold War mentality and zero-sum game theory, work together to overcome difficulties in pursuit of win-win situations, resolve disputes through dialogue and negotiation and build a peaceful and stable international and regional security environment.

Arms control, disarmament and non-proliferation play an important role in maintaining international peace and security. Every Member State should cultivate an attitude of cooperation and openness to innovation and a readiness to take responsibility and, in that spirit, make further efforts to move the arms control and disarmament processes forward.

To that end, we must, first of all, take credible steps as the international community to reduce the threat of nuclear weapons, steadily move forward nuclear disarmament and resolve non-proliferation issues through political and diplomatic means. All nuclear-weapon States should make an unequivocal commitment to the no-first-use of nuclear weapons and negotiate and conclude a treaty on the no-first-use of nuclear weapons against one another. Nuclear-weapon States should also make an unequivocal and unconditional commitment not to use or threaten to use nuclear weapons against non-nuclear-weapon States or nuclear-weapon-free zones, and they should conclude a legally binding international instrument in that regard.

The countries with the largest nuclear arsenals should continue to take the lead in making drastic and substantive reductions in their nuclear-weapon arsenals. When conditions are ripe, other nuclear-weapon States should also join in multilateral negotiations on nuclear disarmament. The Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty should be brought into force at an early date, and the Conference on Disarmament should start negotiations on a fissile material cut-off treaty as soon as possible. Nuclear disarmament should adhere to the principles of maintaining global strategic balance and stability and undiminished security for all. The development of missile defence systems that undermine global strategic balance and stability should be abandoned.

Nuclear non-proliferation constitutes an essential condition for the complete prohibition and thorough destruction of nuclear weapons. An international security environment of cooperation and trust should be fostered. We must respect one another's security concerns and legitimate interests, and double standards should be discarded. All parties should pursue peaceful solutions to regional nuclear issues through political and diplomatic means.

Establishing nuclear-weapon-free zones is an important step towards the realization of a world free of nuclear weapons. China welcomes the progress in resolving outstanding issues relating to the Protocol to the Treaty on the South-East Asia Nuclear-Weapon-Free Zone between the five permanent members of the Security Council (P-5) and the countries of the Association of Southeast Asian Nations. China also welcomes the political statement on Mongolia's nuclear-weapon-free status made by the P-5 and Mongolia. We encourage all the relevant parties to actively

participate in the 2012 international conference on the establishment of a Middle East zone free of nuclear weapons and all other weapons of mass destruction, and to make efforts to achieve substantive results.

China welcomes the success of the first session of the Preparatory Committee for the 2015 Review Conference of the Parties to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons. States parties should take the opportunity to implement the recommendations contained in the final document of the 2010 Review Conference in order to advance the purposes and objectives of the Treaty. China strictly fulfils its obligations under the Treaty and has actively participated in the P-5 efforts to implement the it. The first experts' meeting of the P-5 working group on a glossary of definitions for key nuclear terms, which China chairs, took place successfully in Beijing last month. That will enhance mutual understanding and the exchange of views among the P-5 in the nuclear field.

Secondly, we must implement the existing international legal instruments in good faith and steadily push the disarmament process forward in the fields of chemical and biological weapons. Since its entry into force, 15 years ago, the Chemical Weapons Convention has played an important role in eliminating the threat of chemical weapons. The Organization for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons and the States parties to the Convention should continue to focus their efforts on chemical weapons disarmament as a matter of priority, while advancing in a balanced manner their work in other key areas.

China has been a victim of chemical weapons. The chemical weapons abandoned by Japan on the territory of China during the Second World War have posed a grave threat to the lives and property of the Chinese people and the environment. Deeply concerned and dissatisfied with the slow pace of destruction of those abandoned chemical weapons, China urges the Japanese side to faithfully fulfil its responsibility as the State party that abandoned the weapons and complete the destruction work as soon as possible.

The Biological Weapons Convention (BWC) has been well implemented. The seventh Review Conference of the BWC established a new round for the intersessional process. States parties should continue to improve national implementation measures in line with their domestic situations, further enhance the universality of the mechanism for confidence-building

measures, strengthen the monitoring and assessment of the development of bioscience and technology and earnestly promote international exchanges and cooperation in the peaceful uses of biotechnology.

Thirdly, we must actively promote preventive diplomacy and prevent information technology and outer space from becoming new battlefields. The wide application of information technology contributes to the development of human civilization. At the same time, the threats to information security have become a challenge for the international community. The current priority is to formulate international rules in the field of information security, so as to motivate all countries to work together to meet the common threats to information security and to ensure that information technologies are used only for the purposes of social and economic development and in line with the objective of maintaining international peace and security. China, together with Russia, Tajikistan and Uzbekistan, submitted a draft international code of conduct for information security to the General Assembly at its sixty-sixth session. In order to enhance understanding of the draft code of conduct, we will organize informal consultations in the margins of this session of the First Committee. We welcome the participation of all delegations.

Outer space is the common heritage of humankind. The threat of an arms race in outer space poses an immediate security challenge to the international community. In 2008, China and Russia submitted a draft treaty on the prevention of the placement of weapons in outer space and on the threat or use of force against outer space objects at the Conference on Disarmament. China looks forward to the early negotiation and conclusion of an international legal instrument based on that draft, so as to prevent the weaponization of outer space and the development of an arms race there. Transparency and confidence-building measures and efforts to prevent an arms race in outer space are mutually complementary. China supports and actively participates in the work of the Group of Governmental Experts on Transparency and Confidence-Building Measures in Outer Space. We hope that the Group will achieve substantive results.

Fourthly, we should all attach great importance to the humanitarian concerns inherently at stake in the field of arms control and steadily push conventional arms-control processes forward. Concluding a feasible and universally acceptable arms trade treaty would be conducive to resolving regional conflicts and

humanitarian concerns caused by the illicit trade in conventional arms. China is ready to continue an exchange of views on relevant issues with all parties in the framework of the United Nations. The recently concluded second Review Conference of the Programme of Action to Prevent, Combat and Eradicate the Illicit Trade in Small Arms and Light Weapons in All Its Aspects successfully adopted an outcome document that provides an opportunity to advance international efforts to combat the illicit trade in small arms and light weapons.

In addressing the humanitarian concerns caused by landmines and other conventional weapons, the legitimate military security needs of sovereign countries should also be taken fully into account. The Chinese Government has been dedicated to international cooperation in humanitarian demining efforts to help mine-affected countries. China has already provided humanitarian demining and victim assistance to over 40 developing countries affected by mines and cluster munitions.

Fifthly, we must firmly safeguard the authority of the multilateral disarmament machinery and make every effort to revitalize the work of the Conference on Disarmament. The Conference has successfully concluded treaties that constitute the pillars of the current multilateral arms control, disarmament and non-proliferation regimes. It has the most representative membership, with rules of procedure that can fully protect the interests of Member States, as well as rich experience and the necessary expertise in negotiations. The root causes of the deadlock in the Conference on Disarmament lie in political factors. Member States should actively pursue consultations at the Conference on an equal footing and seek solutions acceptable to all. At the same time, efforts should be made outside the Conference to accommodate States' legitimate security concerns, so as to create a favourable environment for the commencement of negotiations.

Abandoning the Conference on Disarmament is not the right way to solve the problem. Establishing new mechanisms outside the Conference on Disarmament and removing the core agenda items, including the negotiation of a fissile material cut-off treaty, will not ensure the participation of all major countries. That will not move us any closer to the objectives of nuclear disarmament and non-proliferation of the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons; nor will it contribute to the healthy and orderly development of

the overall international arms control and disarmament process.

China supports the early commencement at the Conference of negotiations on a cut-off treaty, as well as the launching of substantive work on other core agenda items — such as the prevention of an arms race in outer space, negative security assurances and nuclear disarmament — on the basis of a comprehensive and balanced programme of work. The international community should further pursue consensus in that regard.

Ms. Chew Lee Giok (Malaysia): I wish to extend my warmest congratulations to you, Sir, on your election as Chair of the First Committee at its sixty-seventh session. My congratulations also go to the other members of the Bureau.

At the outset, my delegation associates itself with the statements made at the Committee's 2nd meeting by the representative of Iran, on behalf of the Non-Aligned Movement, and by the representative of Myanmar, on behalf of the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN).

Malaysia is concerned that developments in reducing nuclear weapons have continued to be elusive over the past year. Indeed, our work to rid of the world of the destructive force of nuclear weapons has remained without much progress. We believe that greater effort is required from all States in order to achieve general and complete disarmament under effective international controls, with the goal of the total elimination of nuclear weapons. The Conference on Disarmament has entered its fourteenth consecutive year of absolute paralysis. That lack of progress cannot continue forever. We call on all concerned parties to renew their efforts with a view to making progress in that field.

Malaysia reaffirms the crucial role of the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT) in nuclear disarmament, nuclear non-proliferation and the peaceful uses of nuclear energy. We welcome the outcome of the first session of the Preparatory Committee for the 2015 Review Conference of the Parties to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons, which took place in Vienna. We will continue to call for the urgent conclusion of a universal, unconditional and legally binding instrument on security assurances.

On a related note, the fate of the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty (CTBT) remains unchanged. Malaysia will continue to call on all States to work together towards the entry into force of the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty, with a particular focus on the annex 2 States, whose signature and ratification of the CTBT are necessary for the Treaty's entry into force. We welcome the recent ratifications by Indonesia, Guatemala and Guinea, but it has been 16 years since the CTBT was opened for signature and yet it still remains non-operational.

Despite such setbacks, there have been encouraging signs of developments at the regional level. Malaysia is encouraged by the ongoing consultations between ASEAN and the nuclear-weapon States on the protocol to the Southeast Asian Nuclear-Weapon-Free Zone Treaty. We look forward to the developments from those consultations, with the objective of signing the protocol with the nuclear-weapon States.

Malaysia also extends its full support to the establishment in the Middle East of a zone free of all weapons of mass destruction. We call for the timely implementation of steps towards the convening of a conference, which could provide the necessary impetus to the creation of such a zone.

Multilateralism continues to be an important platform for the global effort to eliminate dangerous conventional weapons. In that regard, Malaysia welcomes the convening of the Conference on the Arms Trade Treaty last July. Malaysia participated actively in the negotiations, in the hope of achieving the desired outcome of a legally binding international treaty. It is unfortunate that the negotiations did not produce the intended outcome. We believe that Member States should continue to push ahead and continue those negotiations, with a view to adopting such a treaty as soon as possible.

Similarly, Malaysia welcomes the successful outcome 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, which was held recently in New York. We call for the full implementation of the International Instrument to enable Member States to Identify and Trace, in a Timely and Reliable Manner, Illicit Small Arms and Light Weapons. We firmly believe that the Programme of Action will promote and facilitate international cooperation. Such cooperation

will enhance effectiveness and complement existing bilateral, regional and international agreements to prevent, combat and eradicate the illicit trade in small arms and light weapons in all its aspects.

The destructive nature of nuclear weapons, with their far-reaching consequences, is an impetus for all Member States to take that threat seriously. Given the horrible consequences and the threat that such weapons pose to human civilization, Malaysia places great importance on nuclear disarmament. As such, Malaysia will highlight that threat by submitting our traditional draft resolution on the follow-up to the advisory opinion of the International Court of Justice on the *Legality of the threat or use of nuclear weapons* (see A/51/218). Malaysia's draft resolution could serve as a basis for negotiations leading to nuclear disarmament in all its aspects under strict and effective international control. Malaysia calls on all States to fulfil that obligation by commencing multilateral negotiations leading to the conclusion of a nuclear-weapons convention at the earliest possible date. To that end, we look forward to more support from Member States to sponsor and support the draft resolution.

As a member of the Executive Council of the Organization for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons (OPCW), Malaysia has continued to promote the effective implementation of, and compliance with, the Chemical Weapons Convention. The Convention is the first multilateral instrument that is non-discriminatory and provides for comprehensive and verifiable prohibition of a whole category of chemical weapons. Over the past 15 years, the OPCW has successfully facilitated the elimination of more than 70 per cent of the world's declared chemical-weapons stockpile. In that pursuit, Malaysia assures Members of its full cooperation in strengthening the work of the Organization.

Malaysia has always supported the efforts of the international community to press for universal adherence to the Biological and Toxin Weapons Convention (BWC) and compliance with its provisions. In line with article IV of the Convention, Malaysia is in the process of introducing legislation on a biological-weapons bill, which will ensure effective implementation of the BWC.

In conclusion, Malaysia has remained committed to the global effort to achieve general and complete disarmament under strict and effective international control. My delegation is ready to work with you, Mr. Chair, and other Member States towards achieving

a positive and successful outcome to the work of the First Committee.

Ms. Adamson (United Kingdom): At the outset, allow me to align my delegation with the statement delivered on behalf of the European Union at the Committee's 2nd meeting.

Let me also say what a pleasure it is to have you, Mr. Chair, presiding over us. You prove that, while you can take the Ambassador out of Geneva, you cannot take Geneva out of the Ambassador.

The First Committee is often cited as providing an opportunity to take stock of the developments across the disarmament and international security agenda. While that is certainly the case, it is more than that; it is also an opportunity for progress. The sixty-seventh session of the First Committee will cover issues that represent the most significant challenges to international peace and security facing the world today. If we are to hope to see tangible progress across that range of issues, we must all be prepared to work together on a balanced, realistic approach to multilateral arms control, disarmament and non-proliferation.

The United Kingdom plays a leading role in a range of the disarmament and related international security issues that are the subject of our deliberations here in New York. If I may, I would like to give a few examples of the work we have been doing over the past year. I shall come back to the matter of the disarmament machinery during the segment on nuclear issues.

On nuclear disarmament, we have built upon the significant reductions announced in our 2010 Strategic Defence and Security Review with a number of additional important disarmament steps. We co-hosted, with Norway, a workshop with non-nuclear-weapon States to share information based on the ground-breaking collaborative work we have conducted together so far on the verification of nuclear-warhead dismantlement. Earlier this year, the United Kingdom hosted the first-ever meeting of the five permanent members of the Security Council (P-5) to discuss nuclear disarmament verification, where we shared our lessons from the United Kingdom-Norway initiative and exchanged views on that work.

The P-5 also met in June at the Washington, D.C., P-5 Conference. That was the third time that policy officials, military staff and nuclear scientists from all five nuclear-weapon member States of the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT) have

met in that format, following the London and Paris Conferences, and it provided a valuable opportunity to discuss taking forward our disarmament and non-proliferation commitments under the action plan of the 2010 Review Conference of the Parties to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons.

As one of the three States that are co-convenors of the proposed conference on a Middle East zone free of weapons of mass destruction free zone, we continue to support the objective of establishing such a zone. The United Kingdom remains committed to fulfilling the mandates given to us in that regard at the 2010 Review Conference. We are providing practical and financial support to the appointed facilitator of the conference, Mr. Jaako Laajava of Finland. The process presents an important opportunity for States in the region to discuss how they could work towards a Middle East zone free of weapons of mass destruction. We know how much serious work is already under way in many of the States of the region. Their constructive engagement and agreement will be required to deliver a successful conference.

I have also heard mention, during the opening of the First Committee, of the importance of the South-East Asia Nuclear-Weapon-Free-Zone. I share the determination that the P-5 should soon sign the Protocol to the Treaty of Bangkok. I also join others in welcoming the adoption of a declaration by the nuclear-weapon States and Mongolia on that country's nuclear-weapon-free status, on 17 September in New York.

At the Nuclear Security Summit in March, the United Kingdom led a new multinational initiative on nuclear information security, which was supported by 31 countries. Through our contribution to the Global Partnership against the Spread of Weapons and Materials of Mass Destruction, we have delivered on improved nuclear and biological security, the implementation of Security Council resolution 1540 (2004) and the engagement of scientists. We will continue to encourage tangible progress towards those four priority areas when we assume the presidency of the Global Partnership in 2013.

The United Kingdom is deeply committed to the implementation of the Chemical Weapons Convention and to the role of the Organization for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons. By August, 75 per cent of the world's declared stockpiles of chemical weapons agents had been verifiably destroyed. But we cannot be complacent; significant threats remain, and the

Convention does not yet have universal reach. As we have seen with Syria, real threats exist. We recall that the use of chemical weapons is prohibited by general international law and by treaties, including the Protocol for the Prohibition of the Use in War of Asphyxiating, Poisonous or Other Gases, and of Bacteriological Methods of Warfare, signed in Geneva in 1925, and we stress that any use would be unlawful.

The United Kingdom welcomes the outcomes of the seventh Review Conference of the Parties to the Biological Weapons Convention, in December 2011. We commend your role in that outcome, Mr. Chair. We also welcome the goals set for the 2012 to 2016 intersessional process. One key area for us, in the general area of cooperation and assistance, relates to biosafety and biosecurity capabilities. The challenge now is how to implement appropriate solutions around the world. That will require international leadership and coordination as well as local engagement.

The work to prevent and eradicate the illicit trafficking in small arms and light weapons remains a vital component of the global effort to tackle the problems caused by the poorly controlled proliferation of conventional arms. We welcome the successful outcome of this year's review of the United Nations Conference to Review Progress Made in the Implementation of the Programme of Action to Prevent, Combat and Eradicate the Illicit Trade in Small Arms and Light Weapons in All Its Aspects. In partnership with many of the Member States that we have heard from, the United Kingdom has worked hard on a long list of possible improvements that could strengthen the Programme of Action. While we could not achieve everything we might have hoped for, we were delighted that the Conference achieved a positive result that will move us a number of steps forward, in particular the recognition that small arms and light weapons can be used to undermine human rights laws; the improvements to the implementation of the International Instrument to Enable States to Identify and Trace, in a Timely and Reliable Manner, Illicit Small Arms and Light Weapons; and the creation of a voluntary sponsorship fund to provide assistance to States on small arms and light weapons issues.

I would like to add my voice to those that have thanked the excellent Chair of the Conference, Mrs. Joy Ogwu, who led us through the review process by building consensus on that most important issue through an open and inclusive style of work. Thanks are also due to the community of non-governmental

organizations, which have worked on that issue for 11 years. Our work is far from over. We hope that the partnerships among Governments, civil society and industry continue to flourish as we implement the results of the Review Conference.

We shared the disappointment of many States that we were unable to adopt an arms trade treaty at the end of the United Nations Conference on the Arms Trade Treaty in July. We said then that, although disappointed, we remained determined to move forward. Since then the international community has had time to reflect on the outcome of the Conference. I want to make absolutely clear that the Conference did not end in failure. To say that it did is to ignore the huge progress that was made towards our ultimate aim of a high-standard and well-supported arms trade treaty. Crucially, the appetite to finish our work remains undiminished, and there is a strong sense that agreement on the treaty is close. We saw that again earlier this week during consultations on a draft resolution on the arms trade treaty. We and the co-authors were so gratified to see so many people in the room putting forth contributions towards the text of the draft resolution.

We have not sat idly by since July. Extensive consultations among arms trade treaty supporters have taken place to try to identify the most effective way of finalizing work on the treaty and ensuring the continued participation of the entire United Nations membership in that work. For the strength of the arms trade treaty will be found not only in the effectiveness of its provisions, but also in the breadth of support that it secures. There is a song by the Rolling Stones, which is entitled “You can’t always get what you want”. I have changed that slightly to “You can’t always get everything you want”, but hopefully everyone will get something they want from the arms trade treaty.

The overwhelming view of the States that we have spoken to is that a further, short conference should be convened as early as possible in 2013. The new conference should operate under the same rules of procedure as applied in July, with the objective of finalizing the work of that conference. Our intention should be clear in that respect: to secure agreement on a robust and effective arms trade treaty during this session of the General Assembly. To that end, the co-authors will submit a draft resolution setting the timing for a short, final, consensus-based conference to finalize work on the treaty. At the end of July, some States asked for more time to consider the Conference

President’s draft text, and it is only right that we give them some more time. The new conference will provide the platform from which to conclude our work. To achieve that, we must build on the progress already made, and the President’s draft treaty text has given us a solid base from which to work. Our work on the arms trade treaty should finish in the same manner in which it began, as part of an inclusive United Nations process. In that way, it will find the broad support the treaty needs in order to be effective, and we will be able to make a positive impact on millions of lives.

In conclusion, we have been talking a lot about disarmament machinery. Let us remember that we have, in the arms trade treaty, an authentic, live example of where we can make a real difference in the real world, to real people. Let us show, during the sixty-seventh session of the General Assembly, that we can come together, making the diversity of the United Nations its strength, and not a weakness. It is not about slogans. It is not about a piece of paper. It is about changing the world together. I can. You can. We can.

Mrs. Harbaoui (Tunisia) (*spoke in French*): On behalf of the Tunisian delegation, I wish to convey to you, Sir, my sincere congratulations on your election to the chairmanship of the First Committee and to assure you of my delegation’s full support and cooperation in accomplishing your task and achieving tangible results. I also commend Ms. Angela Kane, High Representative for Disarmament Affairs, and wish her every success in assuming her new duties.

My delegation aligns itself with the statements made on behalf of the Non-Aligned Movement, the Arab States and the African States.

The First Committee is meeting at a critical juncture to consider the progress made in disarmament and international security and to take stock of the various challenges facing the non-proliferation and disarmament regimes and, consequently, international peace and security. We all recognize the progress achieved in the past two years in terms of disarmament and non-proliferation. Tunisia sets great value on multilateral disarmament efforts and continues to support all efforts aimed at limiting nuclear weapons and reducing the risk of nuclear proliferation. My delegation also commends the Secretary-General for having made disarmament one of his priorities and for having become personally involved in the debate.

Those who are serious about making real progress in international disarmament can no longer accept the absence of substantive negotiations within the Disarmament Commission. In launching a new triennial cycle from 2012 to 2014, Commission member States have demonstrated their genuine political will to strengthen the international disarmament machinery.

As the cornerstone of the global nuclear regime, the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT) has helped to slow the rate of nuclear proliferation, although it has not matched those results in terms of prevention. The Treaty's nearly universal membership and its indefinite extension, since 1995, have made further strengthening possible. Despite the Treaty's flaws and weaknesses, Tunisia takes this opportunity to reaffirm its belief that the NPT remains unparalleled in the area of international security.

As there cannot be, nor should there be, any alternative other than to support and strengthen the NPT, States parties are called upon to make progress in the following key areas — while preserving the balance among the Treaty's three pillars—nuclear disarmament, non-proliferation, and cooperation among the States Parties with respect to the peaceful uses of nuclear energy. The first pillar calls for progress towards general and nuclear disarmament. The second pillar would guarantee States' security by combating proliferation while addressing the underlying root causes. And the third seeks to ensure access for all States that so desire to the benefits of the peaceful uses of nuclear energy.

The Middle East is one of the areas most affected, as the result of certain parties' refusal to adhere to the NPT and to subject their nuclear sites to the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) comprehensive safeguards system, in spite of numerous appeals made by other States in the region and requests on the part of the General Assembly in various resolutions. We therefore call upon the international community, in particular the influential Powers, to adopt urgent and practical measures for the creation of a nuclear-weapon-free zone in that region. Tunisia firmly shares that hope and welcomes the upcoming conference on the creation of a nuclear-weapon-free zone and a zone free of weapons of mass destruction in the Middle East, which is scheduled to take place in Helsinki at the end of December.

The dynamic of the international arms trade has changed as a result of globalization. Inadequately

regulated international arms transfers serve as fuel for civil conflicts, destabilize regions and strengthen terrorism and criminal networks. A response to the threat posed by conventional weapons should not be an afterthought of the international community, given that the world has been inundated by arms and that peace is too fragile. In that context, Tunisia attaches great importance to the conclusion of the arms trade treaty, as a universal, legally binding instrument to define common norms and standards on the import, export and transfer of conventional weapons. The treaty should limit the supply of arms and munitions in areas of conflict and instability, and preserve peace, security and regional stability, while strengthening respect for human rights and international humanitarian law.

Mindful of the importance of the Chemical Weapons Convention after 15 successful years and of its clear impact on international peace and security, my country sets great store by the Convention and will continue its actions aimed at achieving the fundamental objective, namely, implementing and strengthening the prohibition of chemical weapons.

We also welcome the positive results obtained at the recent second United Nations Conference to Review Progress Made in the Implementation of the Programme of Action to Prevent, Combat and Eradicate the Illicit Trade in Small Arms and Light Weapons in All Its Aspects. We call upon Member States to voluntarily submit their national reports every two years. In that context, my delegation endorses the recommendations aimed at providing fresh impetus to the implementation of the Programme of Action and the International Instrument to Enable States to Identify and Trace, in a Timely and Reliable Manner, Illicit Small Arms and Light Weapons. It also expresses its concern with regard to the increased number of such weapons that are circulating worldwide.

It is well known that Africa is the continent most affected by conflicts of all types. It is therefore also one of the largest theatres for the illicit trafficking of weapons of every type and calibre and from every source. That is why all of us, as members of the international community, must preserve our longstanding commitment to implementing the Programme of Action, which we consider to be the main framework for our efforts to prevent, combat and eliminate the illicit trade in those weapons in all their aspects. Accordingly, my delegation would place particular emphasis on the efforts needed at the regional and subregional levels to

tackle both supply and demand in the context of the illicit trade in small arms and light weapons, with a view to curbing the transnational movements of illicit weapons, including their illicit trafficking.

In conclusion, I wish to reiterate the importance that Tunisia attaches to all aspects of multilateral disarmament and our commitment and readiness to cooperate fully with the Chair and the other members of the Bureau. In that connection, we call upon the competent organizations to further develop and strengthen their cooperation in working with States at the national and regional levels in order to attain peace and security worldwide.

Mr. Ngoun (Cambodia): Please allow me, Sir, on behalf of the Cambodian delegation, to extend our sincere congratulations to you upon your election as the Chair of the First Committee at its sixty-seventh session. Our congratulations also go to all the members of the Bureau. We have no doubt that under your competent leadership the Committee will be able to conclude its deliberations successfully. Please rest assured of the Cambodian delegation's full support and cooperation.

The Cambodian delegation associates itself with the statement made by the Iranian representative on behalf of the Non-Aligned Movement, as well as the statement made by the representative of Myanmar on behalf of the members of the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN).

Cambodia attaches great importance to nuclear disarmament and non-proliferation, as they relate to world peace and security. The catastrophic destruction of Hiroshima and Nagasaki in 1945 is a horrific reminder of the destructive power of nuclear weapons and their potential to annihilate entire cities. With the existence of an estimated 23,000 nuclear weapons in the world, each one exponentially more powerful than either of the bombs dropped on Hiroshima and Nagasaki, the very existence of humankind is threatened. Therefore, efforts to achieve the total elimination of nuclear weapons should be the top priority of our forum and the agenda of the international community.

While welcoming the successful conclusion of the first session of the Preparatory Committee for the 2015 Review Conference of the States Parties to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons, our delegation believes that the major achievement of the nuclear disarmament effort was the adoption, by consensus, of the final document of the 2010 Review

Conference of the States Parties to Treaty, which contains very positive recommendations.

Cambodia reiterates its strongest support for a global ban on nuclear testing, which would help to achieve a safer and more secure world. We firmly believe that the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty must enter into force without further delay. We strongly encourage those nations that have not yet joined the Treaty to do so as soon as possible in order to put an end to the testing of nuclear weapons.

The terrible accident in Fukushima Prefecture last year highlighted the utmost importance of nuclear safety and security as high-priority issues on the agenda of the international community. It also demonstrated that nuclear accidents respect no borders and therefore require international cooperation. Cambodia, for its part, acceded, in March, to the Convention on Early Notification of a Nuclear Accident and the Convention on Nuclear Safety.

The world must redouble its efforts to address the issue of small arms and light weapons, as they continue to pose a direct threat to international peace and development. In our estimation, the classification "small and light" is misleading, given the grave impact that such weapons have on civilians. Around the globe, small arms and light weapons kill innocent civilians daily, with about 500,000 civilian casualties per year, including women and children. Only through enhanced cooperation at the national, regional and global levels will we be able to advance our cause to effectively fight and eradicate the illicit use and transfer of small arms and light weapons. In that connection, Cambodia welcomes the successful conclusion of the United Nations Conference to Review Progress Made in the Implementation of the Programme of Action to Prevent, Combat and Eradicate the Illicit Trade in Small Arms and Light Weapons in All Its Aspects, at which Member States adopted by consensus an outcome document that highlights their renewed commitment on the matter.

Cambodia is firmly committed to addressing threats involving small arms and light weapons, through strengthened enforcement of the Management of Weapons, Explosives and Ammunitions Act, which has been in effect since 2005. With the strong cooperation of the relevant agencies and its partners, Cambodia was able to confiscate and destroy thousands of illegal small arms and light weapons. Civilians in Cambodia have no legal rights to possess guns. Cambodia has also resolved to forge closer cooperation with ASEAN

members, with a view to combating transnational crime and other transboundary security challenges, including arms smuggling.

Ensuring global peace, security and stability is our responsibility. Our pledge, set forth in the Charter of the United Nations, is clear: “We the peoples of the United Nations, determined to save succeeding generations from the scourge of war ... unite our strength to maintain international peace and security”. In that spirit, Cambodia has contributed hundreds of peacekeepers to United Nations peacekeeping operations in Africa and Asia. Currently, in South Sudan, Cambodian military police and medical units are assisting in operations. Moreover, in Lebanon, Cambodian peacekeepers are contributing to the demining effort. We affirm the importance of such efforts and stand ready to dispatch additional troops to other peacekeeping operations.

Last year in Phnom Penh, Cambodia hosted the successful eleventh Meeting of States Parties to the Convention on the Prohibition of the Use, Stockpiling, Production and Transfer of Anti-Personnel Mines and on Their Destruction. To promote international cooperation on demining action, aimed at putting an end to the suffering and casualties caused by anti-personnel mines and at addressing the challenge of removing those silent and indiscriminate killers that exist throughout the world, Cambodia, as the president of the Meeting, will, on behalf of Albania and Slovenia, the past and future Presidents of the Meeting, introduce a traditional draft resolution in the Committee entitled “Implementation of the Convention on the Prohibition of the Use, Stockpiling, Production and Transfer of Anti-Personnel Mines and on Their Destruction”. My delegation hopes that the draft resolution will, as in previous years, receive strong support from State and non-State parties to the Convention.

In conclusion, we are of the opinion that only by thinking, working and staying together in order to enhance cooperation will we achieve our shared objective of complete disarmament and attain our goal of a safer and more secure world for all.

Mr. Kellerman (South Africa): Please accept my delegation’s congratulations on your election, Sir, to lead our work during this year’s session of the First Committee. My delegation stands ready to lend its full support to your efforts to guide our work.

At the outset, my delegation wishes to associate itself with the statements delivered on behalf of the

Movement of Non-Aligned Countries (NAM), the African States and the New Agenda Coalition.

The past year has once again proved to be a slow one for international multilateral disarmament and non-proliferation efforts. The Conference on Disarmament once again could not agree on a programme of work, while negotiations to produce an arms trade treaty also did not bear fruit. During the past few years, increased attention has been focused on the future of the United Nations disarmament machinery. Such attention has resulted from the continuing impasse in the relevant multilateral forums for securing progress on key disarmament priorities. Virtually none of the institutions established in 1978 at the first special session of the General Assembly devoted to disarmament has been able to escape that predicament. The significant level of overlap, duplication and contradiction among the various First Committee draft resolutions on priority disarmament issues, as well as the continued divergence reflected in the votes on those draft resolutions, illustrate the ongoing challenges facing the international community.

With regard to nuclear disarmament and nuclear non-proliferation, let me say that South Africa remains committed to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT) as the foundation of the nuclear disarmament and nuclear non-proliferation regime. We consequently view the successful outcome of the 2010 NPT Review Conference as significant. The final outcome document of the 2010 Review Conference reconfirms the validity of the agreements reached in 1995 and 2000, including the unequivocal undertaking by the nuclear-weapon States to accomplish the total elimination of their nuclear arsenals. In that context, it also contains a number of important measures aimed at achieving our goal of a world free from the threat posed by nuclear weapons.

The challenge now is to ensure that those undertakings are turned into concrete actions that would restore confidence in the nuclear non-proliferation regime, which has been subjected to significant tension during the past decade. Nuclear weapons are a source of insecurity, not security. They have no place in today’s security environment. The humanitarian imperatives that underpin the need for their complete elimination demand a renewed determination by all States and members of civil society to permanently rid our world of the threat of annihilation.

The establishment of a zone free of all weapons of mass destruction in the Middle East also remains an issue of special significance to South Africa. In view of the importance that my delegation attaches to both nuclear-weapon and non-nuclear-weapon States working towards a world free of weapons of mass destruction, we wish to emphasize the importance of holding a Middle East conference during the course of this year.

This year also marks the fifteenth anniversary of the entry into force of the Chemical Weapons Convention. The deadline of 29 April 2012 set by the Convention as the final extended deadline for the destruction of chemical weapons could not be met by the possessor States parties, which means that those States parties failed to comply with their obligation to complete their destruction in accordance with the Convention. Another challenge remaining for the Organization, which has called for urgent and concerted efforts by all States parties, is that of universalizing the Convention. States parties need, therefore, to redouble their efforts to encourage the States not party to the Convention to join it. Regarding the Biological and Toxin Weapons Convention (BWC), my delegation welcomes the outcome of the seventh BWC Review Conference, which took place in Geneva in December 2011. The outcome ensured a number of positive, though modest, gains in strengthening the implementation of the Convention in some important areas. While South Africa would have preferred a stronger outcome, we trust that States parties will fully utilize the new intersessional process and measures agreed to during the Review Conference to advance the aims of the Convention and to strengthen its implementation.

In view of time constraints, I will limit my remarks on conventional weapons to only two issues, that is, the arms trade treaty and the United Nations Programme of Action on Small Arms and Light Weapons.

As we are all aware, the United Nations Conference on the Arms Trade Treaty in July could not reach agreement on the terms of a treaty. However, South Africa believes that great progress has been made towards reaching agreement and that a body of work exists in the form of the last draft text presented by the President of the Conference. We are of the belief that that text should form the basis of negotiations, should we be able to reach agreement to resume our deliberations for the successful conclusion of a strong and robust treaty to regulate the global trade in conventional arms. We

are of the view that, in order to achieve a strong and robust treaty in resumed negotiations, States should endeavour to enter into such negotiations with an open mind, yet with realistic ambitions. Our focus should be on the trade in conventional arms, and we should not be sidetracked by extraneous issues such as possession and production.

While that Conference ended in disappointment, we were very much encouraged by the fact that we were able to reach agreement on an outcome document at the end of the second Review Conference on the Implementation of the United Nations Programme of Action on Small Arms and Light Weapons. That is an especially meaningful breakthrough, given that the first Review Convention, in 2006, ended without agreement on a draft outcome document.

South Africa continues to attach great value to the phrase “in all its aspects” in the title of the Programme of Action. That phrase implies that, in combating the illicit trade, States should take special care, through physical security, legal and administrative structures and instruments, as well as systems and arrangements, that legally held and transferred small arms and light weapons do not enter the illicit market.

Time, unfortunately, does not allow me to cover all the other important issues relating to disarmament, non-proliferation and arms control during this general debate statement. My delegation will therefore present more detailed views during the relevant debates on specific thematic issues, which will follow during the course of the work of the First Committee.

Mr. Ruiz (Colombia) (*spoke in Spanish*): I wish to express to you, Sir, and to the other members of the Bureau my sincerest congratulations upon your election. I am certain that your leadership and experience will allow us to make substantive and efficient progress in the process of revitalizing the so-called disarmament machinery.

The delegation of Colombia aligns itself with the statement delivered by the representative of Chile on behalf of the Community of Latin American and Caribbean States.

My country reiterates the importance of multilateralism in the discussion on and negotiation of matters of disarmament and international security, and it attaches great priority to the effective functioning of the United Nations disarmament machinery, comprising the Disarmament Commission, the First Committee,

where we are meeting today, and the Conference on Disarmament, the only negotiating forum on those important matters.

While weapons of mass destruction pose a serious threat to humankind, we believe that the greatest threat to the security and lives of our citizens is the illicit trafficking in small arms and light weapons. Not only does that scourge take the lives of thousands of people every year, but it also contributes to other criminal acts, such as drug trafficking, kidnapping and terrorism, among others, having become an instrument of armed violence.

That is why we must strive on every level — the subregional, regional and global — to combat the problem. Hence the relevance 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 only global instrument in that area. In that regard, we welcome the holding of the second Review Conference and, in particular, the adoption by consensus of the outcome document. Although the document does not include all of the concerns expressed by States, the references to munitions, explosive and the transfer of arms to non-State actors are, in our view, a step forward in strengthening the implementation of the Programme of Action.

We call on all States to continue working towards the implementation of the Programme of Action and the International Tracing Instrument, and we encourage States to continue fighting against the illicit trafficking of such weapons. Like other criminal behaviour, such trafficking is an evolving phenomenon, which poses new challenges and obstacles to States. I would like to take this opportunity to commend, on behalf of my delegation, the Permanent Representative of Nigeria, Ambassador Joy Ogwu, who chaired the second Review Conference of the Programme of Action in an effective, transparent and inclusive manner. In the First Committee, South Africa will, together with Japan and Colombia, present a draft resolution on such trafficking, which we hope will continue to enjoy the support of all States and will be adopted by consensus, as in previous years.

In keeping with that concern, we believe that the international arms trade must be carried out in an entirely responsible manner in order to prevent the diversion of arms to the illicit market. We therefore highlight the need to adopt a robust non-discriminatory treaty with the highest possible standards that includes

the prohibition of transfers to non-State actors of small arms and light weapons, munitions and explosives, and covers all related activities, such as acquisition, sale, brokering, financing and transport. Only in that way can we guarantee that the trade in arms is carried out in an open, transparent and regulated manner. My delegation attaches the utmost importance to the early convening of a new conference to finalize the negotiation of an arms trade treaty, based on the proposal presented by the President of the Conference held in July this year.

We are also committed to the prohibition of all weapons that have a humanitarian impact, such as anti-personnel mines and cluster munitions. That is why we are a State party to the Convention on Certain Conventional Weapons and to its first four protocols, as well as to the Ottawa Convention on the Prohibition of Anti-Personnel Mines. Moreover, Colombia is also a signatory to the Convention on Cluster Munitions.

With regard to the Ottawa Convention, Colombia would like to draw attention to the ongoing problem of anti-personnel mines, which continue to claim hundreds of victims around the world on the large tracts of land still contaminated by those devices. That is why we add our voice to the chorus condemning, in the strongest terms, the continued use of such weapons — which have already been prohibited by the international community — by illegal armed groups.

Comprehensive action against mines calls for both efforts by States affected by the problem and international assistance and cooperation in anti-mine efforts, which contribute to the strengthening of States' capacities to tackle that humanitarian problem.

With regard to the Convention on Cluster Munitions, we underscore the fact that, before it entered into force, Colombia had destroyed its entire stockpile of such weapons. Furthermore, in spite of Colombia's being only a signatory State, our commitment has meant that we participated as an observer State in the three meetings of States parties to the Convention, which were held in Laos, Lebanon and Oslo, in 2010, 2011 and 2012, respectively.

With regard to nuclear disarmament and non-proliferation, my delegation believes that it is essential that we revitalize the multilateral disarmament machinery and promote the universalization and effective implementation of the relevant legal instruments in that area, which would allow us to move towards a world free from nuclear weapons.

We deem it of central importance to relaunch the proper functioning of the Conference on Disarmament, so that it can commence substantive work with a view to negotiating a fissile material cut-off treaty, a negative security assurances convention and an agreement to prevent an arms race in outer space, among other instruments.

As a member State of the Conference, Colombia expresses its resolve to work constructively to ensure that the Conference can resume its crucially important work, and we call on other members to muster the creativity and political will needed to take the necessary steps to overcome the current standstill in that forum. At the same time, we encourage States to reach agreement and implement a programme of work that meets the aspirations and security needs of the international community.

For Colombia, it is crucial that we attain the universalization of the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT), which is the cornerstone of the nuclear disarmament and non-proliferation regime, and that we ensure the implementation of its three pillars: disarmament, non-proliferation and the promotion of the peaceful uses of nuclear energy. We therefore call on all States parties to move forward in the implementation of both the Treaty and the commitments arising from the 2000 and 2010 Review Conferences, in particular with regard to the establishment of a zone free of nuclear weapons and other weapons of mass destruction in the Middle East. My country believes that the establishment of nuclear-weapon-free zones is a valuable contribution to international peace and security. Likewise, we urge States to make the necessary preparations for the 2015 Review Conference, so that it may have a solid and constructive outcome — efforts that have already begun under the auspices of the Preparatory Committee in Vienna, and which must continue.

However, we cannot talk about the NPT without mentioning and underlining the role of the International Atomic Energy Agency, the guarantor of the peaceful uses of nuclear energy through the comprehensive safeguards agreements.

Nuclear weapons have been used only twice in history. However, more than 1,000 nuclear test explosions have been carried out, leading to the vertical proliferation of such weapons. That is why, while we recognize the value of the moratoriums declared and implemented by nuclear-weapon States, we believe that the entry into force of the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-

Ban Treaty is the only way to avoid such proliferation. We therefore note with satisfaction the recent ratifications of the Treaty, and urge those States that have not yet done so, especially those listed in annex 2, to do so.

We recently celebrated the fifteenth anniversary of the adoption of the Convention on Chemical Weapons, a unique and exemplary international legal instrument in that area. We commend the work carried out by the Organization for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons in enforcing the Convention. In that context, we welcome the high-level meeting held on 1 October to commemorate that anniversary and to look to the future of the Convention. Only once all States have become party to the Convention and implemented its provisions will the threat of chemical warfare be no more.

Finally, to strengthen international peace and security, we must make progress in the implementation of Security Council resolution 1540 (2004), which complements the disarmament and non-proliferation regime by tackling the risks posed by weapons of mass destruction, their components and their delivery systems in the hands of non-State actors and terrorists.

Colombia, with its traditions of promoting peace and respecting international law, places a premium on multilateralism as the means by which the principal legal instruments comprising the disarmament regime were developed and agreed on, and we will continue to participate actively therein, seeking commitments to safeguard the principles enshrined in the Charter.

Mr. Manongi (United Republic of Tanzania): It gives me great pleasure to address this meeting under your stewardship, Mr. Chair. The United Republic of Tanzania joins other delegations in congratulating you and other members of the Bureau on your elections, and in assuring you of our support.

Our delegation also aligns itself with the statements made by the representatives of Nigeria and Indonesia, on behalf of the African Group and the Non-Aligned Movement, respectively.

We are meeting at a time of enormous challenges at the global level, with the re-emergence of conflicts in some parts of the world and growing mistrust among the States Members of the United Nations, all of which is blocking our efforts to achieve general and complete disarmament in a meaningful manner. It is absolutely vital that we address the persisting and ever-growing mistrust and commit to multilateralism as the core

principle of negotiations in the areas of disarmament, non-proliferation and international security.

Tanzania is concerned that we have made little progress on disarmament and arms control since the previous session of the First Committee. The Conference on Disarmament has yet to agree on a balanced and comprehensive programme of work; nuclear-weapon States have yet to make tangible cuts in their nuclear arsenals; and we missed a rare opportunity to adopt a robust multilateral treaty for regulating conventional weapons, which are destabilizing and cause immense suffering to our people in Africa and elsewhere.

Our view is that we must do more during this session and beyond to establish a nuclear-weapon-free zone in the Middle East and in other regions lacking such status. We must also promote the implementation of the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT), in particular the action plans adopted by the Review Conference in 2010 on nuclear disarmament, nuclear non-proliferation, the peaceful uses of nuclear energy and on the implementation of the 1995 resolution on the Middle East.

It is important that we build on the momentum gained from the successes of the second United Nations Conference to Review Progress Made in the Implementation of the Programme of Action to Prevent, Combat and Eradicate the Illicit Trade in Small Arms and Light Weapons in All Its Aspects. The outcome of the Review Conference should inspire our negotiations and lead to the adoption of an arms trade treaty at the earliest opportunity. General and complete disarmament is the only assurance that future generations will be spared the spectre of armed conflict. While affirming the sovereign right of States to acquire, manufacture, export, import and retain conventional arms and their components for their self-defence and security needs, we must also address the growing disparity in the production and possession of and trade in weapons between developed and developing countries.

It is critical that we deploy all the tools at our disposal to prevent the supply of arms and ammunition from reaching armed groups and war profiteers, wherever they operate. The increased proliferation of illicit arms to non-State actors, with their attendant consequences, as witnessed in the Sahel region and other parts of the world, represents, by and large, a failure on the part of States to control stockpiles and transfers of such arms. We must do more to rectify that unfortunate situation, including by adopting a robust arms trade treaty.

I wish to conclude by underscoring the essence of restoring trust among all Members of the United Nations, so that we can move forward on the important disarmament and arms control agenda in a meaningful way. We owe it to current and future generations to rid ourselves of weapons of mass destruction, as well as small arms and light weapons, which are a source of untold suffering and instability in Africa.

I wish all delegations constructive and fruitful deliberations in that regard.

Mr. Bodini (San Marino): At the outset, let me say that I am glad to see you, Sir, as Chair of the First Committee. I am sure that you and the Bureau will successfully guide the Committee's work.

San Marino, the country that I have the honour to represent, has been able to maintain its independence for centuries, not through armed force, but through peaceful means. We believe that in today's world the only way to maintain peace and security is through the use of multilateral diplomacy.

We urge all Member States to accelerate the process of nuclear disarmament. We believe that, in order to succeed in such a difficult, but not impossible, task, we must strengthen the international multilateral arms-control system. Moreover, we strongly support the non-proliferation of nuclear weapons. In that connection, we embrace the Japanese draft resolution entitled "United Action towards the Total Elimination of Nuclear Weapons" and hope that it will receive the broadest possible sponsorship from Member States.

We regret that the Conference on Disarmament has not met the goals and hopes of the international community in recent years. We are very thankful to the International Atomic Energy Agency for its continuous efforts to monitor nuclear issues. Strengthening the control of non-proliferation is of paramount importance to all of us. Doing so, it will be easier to enhance the peaceful uses of nuclear energy. The clock is ticking. Statistically, the chances that a nuclear catastrophe might happen — whether owing to military use, human error or a terrorist act — increase all the time. The most effective action to eliminate such a tragic eventuality would be renewed efforts to strengthen cooperation among Member States.

We also need to address our attention towards conventional weapons. We were disappointed by the result of the July United Nations Conference on an Arms Trade Treaty. In fact, the Conference was not

able to adopt a legally binding instrument. We hope that such efforts will be renewed until a positive result is obtained. We are encouraged by the adoption of the outcome document 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.

In conclusion, we should collectively encourage non-nuclear countries not to embrace the nuclear military path. At the same time, we should ask those countries that possess nuclear arsenals to take upon themselves the responsibility to gradually eliminate those devastating assets.

We must, as members of the international community, accelerate and redouble our efforts with tireless will and determination to eliminate all existing nuclear arsenals, as well as to reduce and eliminate all other weapons of mass destruction. It is in our broadest collective interest, and the sooner we act, the better.

Mr. Och (Mongolia): My delegation congratulates you, Sir, on your assumption of the chairmanship of the Committee, as well as the other members of the Bureau on their elections. I am confident that the Committee will have productive deliberations under your leadership. I assure you of my delegation's full support and cooperation.

Mongolia welcomes the progress that has been made in the fields of disarmament, nuclear non-proliferation and arms control. Renewed momentum was created by the successful Review Conference of the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons in 2010, the first session of the Preparatory Committee for the 2015 Review Conference and the entry into force in 2011 of the New START agreement, signed by Russia and the United States. However, those outcomes await effective implementation and tangible results, which would lead towards a world without nuclear weapons.

My delegation supports non-proliferation and disarmament initiatives promoting the vigorous implementations of the 2010 Action Plan, which has strengthened the international nuclear non-proliferation regime. We are hopeful that all three sessions of the Preparatory Committee for the 2015 Review Conference, including the first, held in Vienna in May, will guide us to the new Review Cycle of the Treaty on the Non-proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT).

As Mongolia is committed to a world free of nuclear weapons, I wish to reiterate my Government's

strong support for nuclear-weapon-free zones and to welcome the important contribution that they make to the advancement of regional and international peace and security. The decision to hold an international conference in 2012 on the establishment of a Middle East zone free of nuclear weapons and other weapons of mass destruction was one of most important achievements of the 2010 NPT Review Conference. We are hopeful that international efforts will yield a result in that matter.

Mongolia looks forward to a successful solution to the ongoing stalemate in the Conference on Disarmament and supports international efforts aimed at revitalizing the work of the Conference. The Minister for Foreign Affairs of Mongolia attended the 2012 session of the Conference on Disarmament last March and appealed to the Conference to resume its substantive work. We are of the view that the Conference on Disarmament remains the best place for conducting multilateral negotiations on disarmament. We also believe that, given the present situation, innovative approaches need to be explored to make the resumption of meaningful disarmament negotiations possible.

The early entry into force of the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty is of crucial importance for nuclear disarmament and non-proliferation. Mongolia welcomes the recent ratifications by Guatemala and Indonesia and joins others in urging annex 2 States to ratify the Treaty as soon as possible.

The potential spread of weapons of mass destruction to non-State actors remains an immediate threat to international peace and security. My delegation appreciates the Secretary-General's initiative to hold a high-level meeting on countering nuclear terrorism on 28 September. We believe that the meeting was an important step forward towards promoting international cooperation in combating terrorism, as called for under the United Nations Global Counter-Terrorism Strategy and the relevant resolutions of the General Assembly. Mongolia also reaffirms its commitment to Security Council resolution 1540 (2004).

I wish to emphasize the essential role of the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) in promoting the ratification and full implementation of the international legal instruments dealing with nuclear terrorism and nuclear security. The IAEA has a central role in strengthening the international nuclear security framework and in helping States to fulfil their nuclear security responsibilities, including by providing

practical assistance. Mongolia welcomes the initiative of the Director General of the IAEA to convene a conference on nuclear security to be held in Vienna in July 2013.

The Government of Mongolia cooperates closely with the IAEA. My delegation would like to take this opportunity to express its appreciation to the Agency for its work in the area of technical cooperation. We value its efforts in helping to introduce the application of nuclear technology in areas such as food and agriculture, health, water resources, the environment and others. The IAEA's decision to select Mongolia as the eighth Model Demonstration Site for its Programme of Action for Cancer Therapy is a practical result of our efforts to enhance cooperation in the health-care sector by implementing a national programme for combating cancer, by improving our capacity to control the disease, in areas that include surveillance, prevention, early detection and diagnosis, cure and palliative care, and by introducing modern radiation medicine technologies and equipment.

The challenge posed by the proliferation of small arms and related materials remains on our agenda this year. My delegation welcomes the renewed commitment to prevent, combat and eradicate the illicit trade in small arms and light weapons undertaken at the 2012 United Nations Conference to Review Progress Made in Implementing the Programme of Action to Prevent, Combat and Eradicate the Illicit Trade in Small Arms and Light Weapons in All Its Aspects.

While the United Nations Conference on the Arms Trade Treaty failed to adopt a legally binding instrument establishing the strictest possible common international standards for the transfer of conventional arms, Mongolia is hopeful that we will agree on a strong, robust, effective and legally binding treaty next year.

My Government looks forward to the third special session of the Conference of States Parties to Review the Operation of the Chemical Weapons Convention, to be held in April 2013. The universality of the Chemical Weapons Convention is an indispensable component in the elimination of weapons of mass destruction. In the light of that, we believe that the high-level meeting held in New York on 1 October to mark the fifteenth anniversary of the Convention gave added impetus to the promotion of the goal of the total elimination of chemical weapons. Mongolia joins others in calling for the achievement of the universality for the Convention

and appeals to those States that are not yet party to it to accede without delay.

Mongolia has always been a firm advocate of nuclear disarmament and non-proliferation and is making efforts to contribute to international peace and security by promoting its nuclear-weapon-free status, which marks its twentieth anniversary this year. Our status enjoys broad international recognition, as attested by a wide range of international instruments, such as the final document of the 2010 NPT Review Conference, the outcome documents of the Conferences of States Parties and Signatories of Treaties that Establish Nuclear-Weapon-Free Zones and Mongolia, and the biennial General Assembly resolutions on Mongolia's international security and nuclear-weapon-free status, as well as the final documents of Non-Aligned Movement summits and ministerial meetings.

In that connection, on 17 September, Mongolia signed a declaration parallel to the joint declaration of the five permanent members (P-5) of the Security Council on Mongolia's nuclear-weapon-free status. Through their joint declaration, the P-5 recognized Mongolia's unique status, stating that they would respect that status and would not contribute to any act that would violate it. Those documents are the result of thorough consultations that duly reflect the interest of all six parties in promoting nuclear non-proliferation and laying the foundations for an agreed regime regarding Mongolia's status.

As in previous years, my delegation will introduce, at this session of the Committee, a draft resolution entitled "Mongolia's international security and nuclear-weapon-free status". I wish to express the hope that members of the Committee will, as in previous years, support the draft resolution and adopt it without a vote.

Mr. Moraes Cabral (Portugal): Allow me to congratulate you, Sir, on your election and, of course, to assure you of Portugal's commitment to and support for the work of the First Committee.

During the past year, significant efforts were devoted to reviewing and updating several important instruments in the field of disarmament and non-proliferation. We hope that those processes will meet with the success they deserve. In that context, we must all recognize that the outcome of the United Nations Conference on the Arms Trade Treaty in July was, to say the least, disappointing. Nevertheless, we are hopeful that, building on the President of the

Conference's draft text of 26 July, a final conference next year can deliver a strong and credible treaty, as mandated by the General Assembly.

We are also concerned about the continued threat of cluster munitions, which still kill and maim many innocent people. We appeal to all States to accede to or ratify the Convention on Cluster Munitions, which remains the only legally binding international instrument governing the production and use of those heinous weapons. Together with Ghana, Portugal has been entrusted by the States parties to the Convention with the task of coordinating efforts to reach universal adherence to the Convention. We will do our utmost to further that objective, in line with our commitment to disarmament, to humanitarian and human rights law and to the protection of civilians.

This year we celebrate the fifteenth anniversary of the entry into force of the Chemical Weapons Convention. I do not have to remind anyone in the room of the far-reaching content and ambition of that landmark instrument. Portugal notes with satisfaction that three quarters of the world's declared stockpiles of such weapons have been destroyed and that the remainder is scheduled for destruction within a short period. That is the result of our collective commitment to the objectives laid out in the Convention, as well as of the remarkable work carried out by the Organization for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons. With that in mind, we look forward to the third Review Conference of the Convention and to discussion of a renewed role for that Organization in a world free of chemical weapons.

Indeed, collective problems demand collective action and collective answers. As the example of the Chemical Weapons Convention shows, active and inclusive multilateralism can provide those answers — active multilateralism where each State abides by its responsibilities as a member of the international community, participates constructively in decision-making and strives to make the world a safer and more peaceful place. That is particularly relevant with regard to the Conference on Disarmament and the worrying impasse in its work. Not only must negotiations of a fissile material cut-off treaty start in earnest, a moratorium on the production of fissile material for nuclear weapons must also be fully upheld by all concerned parties.

Those issues demand inclusive approaches. The Conference must become more open, and its membership must be reviewed, so that new countries can be brought

into its fold and be allowed to participate in a common effort to address decisive issues that concern us all. Along with other observer States to the Conference on Disarmament, Portugal has called for the appointment of a special rapporteur who can examine enlargement modalities without any prejudice to the outcome. Such an appointment is indeed urgent. The fact that several countries wish to join the Conference underlines its continued relevance, the confidence placed in it and the political commitment of individual States to shared objectives. It is indeed a unique opportunity to further our common agenda that cannot and should not be shunned.

Another issue of concern for my country relates to the responsibility of States vis-à-vis the implementation of the international obligations and commitments they have undertaken under the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons. In that context, we are particularly concerned about the Democratic People's Republic of Korea's unwillingness to comply fully with such obligations, as well as its continuing disrespect of relevant Security Council resolutions, which contributes to increased instability in its region.

Likewise, we deem it unacceptable that no progress has yet been achieved in solving the outstanding issues between Iran and the International Atomic Energy Agency, despite the significant diplomatic efforts that have been deployed and the international pressure that has been exerted on Tehran. We once again urge Iran to seriously engage, without preconditions, in those diplomatic efforts and to give verifiable assurances on the peaceful purpose of its nuclear programme, thus fulfilling its international obligations. Cases of regional proliferation have also met with strong international condemnation. They are serious sources of instability and pose threats to peace.

Portugal fully supports the initiative to establish a nuclear-weapon-free zone in the Middle East and looks forward to the outcome of the United Nations conference that will be held later this year in Finland for that purpose.

To conclude, let me mention nuclear tests, which the international community decided to ban more than 15 years ago. Regrettably, the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty, despite its near-universality, has yet to enter into force. We appeal to all States that have not yet done so to ratify that Treaty, thereby recognizing its central place in our disarmament and non-proliferation architecture and agenda.

I have mentioned what Portugal believes to be some issues of particular relevance to our work. We remain committed to the goals of disarmament and non-proliferation, and we hope that this session of the First Committee will make a substantive contribution to those objectives.

The Chair: I shall now give the floor to members who wish to speak in exercise of the right of reply.

Mr. Ibrahim (Syrian Arab Republic) (*spoke in Arabic*): Allow me, at the outset, to remind the representative of France that, in 1960, his country carried out its first detonation of a nuclear bomb in the Algerian desert — an act that resulted in a humanitarian and environmental disaster, the radioactive effects of which persist to this day. We would also refer to French reports that experiments were carried out on live subjects tied to posts around the detonation area. The bomb was four times the size of that dropped on Hiroshima. We would also remind him of the illegal nuclear tests carried out by his country in the Pacific Ocean. I would also like to remind him that his country is solely responsible for being the first to introduce nuclear weapons into the Middle East by providing Israel with the Dimona nuclear reactor in 1955, which reactor can produce nuclear weapons.

We would be happy if France and other countries admitted to their responsibility in creating the only nuclear Power in the Middle East, namely, Israel, and apologized for that. Then they can preach about providing assistance to the conference on establishing a nuclear-weapon-free zone and one free of other weapons of mass destruction in the Middle East. France is a nuclear-weapon State, and therefore has a special responsibility in terms of supporting global nuclear non-proliferation and does not have a specific responsibility to assist Israel in acquiring nuclear weapons.

My country reiterates that the allegations regarding the presence of chemical weapons in my country are totally baseless. They are part of a campaign aimed at inciting a military campaign against my country — a campaign led by the countries promoting such allegations, including France and the United Kingdom, which are closely tied to situations of tension and instability in various parts of the world. My country, Syria, is a party to the Protocol for the Prohibition of the Use in War of Asphyxiating, Poisonous or Other Gases, and of Bacteriological Methods of Warfare and is fully committed to it. We are ready to join the Chemical

Weapons Convention with regard to the Middle East, as soon as Israel adheres to it and to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons.

Mr. Simon-Michel (France) (*spoke in French*): I take the floor again following the statement I have just heard. In truth, this is the second year that our Syrian colleague has made exactly the same fantastical and untrue allegations against my country. So as not to give any more attention to his untruthful and defamatory allegations than they deserve, I would refer to the statement in right of reply that my country made last year following the same statement made by the same delegation.

The Chair: I give the floor to the representative of Germany.

Mr. Hoffmann (Germany): This is actually a matter that I should probably have brought up under “Any other business”. It is a practical matter, so to speak, and has to do with the practice of QuickFirst. Before I do so, since this is the first time I am taking the floor, allow me to just say what a pleasure it is to see a good old friend from Geneva in the Chair.

This is about QuickFirst. We all very much value the work that QuickFirst is doing, but today I have detected a practice that I am afraid will only create confusion. I wanted to check on what the situation was with regard to the draft resolution on the Conference on Disarmament, because I am in charge of managing the process of consultations on that draft resolution, as President of the Conference. I found out that last year’s resolution is posted on QuickFirst under the date of 18 October of this year, and it is actually under Germany, presumably because I am the representative of Germany and I am President of the Conference on Disarmament. I am afraid that that will lead delegations to believe that the text they find there is this year’s draft resolution, which is not the case. In fact, we circulated this year’s draft resolution yesterday under the date of 12 October, which is tomorrow, for the informal consultations.

As I understand it, QuickFirst does things that way in order to provide delegations with a format for how to develop draft resolutions from a technical point of view, I would strongly advise that you, Sir, point out very clearly on the draft resolution sample and the draft itself that that is done only for technical reasons, just to avoid creating the impression that the document is

indeed the draft for this year. My remarks are meant really only as a practical suggestion.

The Chair: I would like to ask the Secretary of the Committee to clarify.

Mr. Cherniavsky (Secretary of the Committee): We apologize if there was some confusion. It is the practice of the Secretariat to post sample draft resolutions. For the sake of convenience, we used last year's text. The draft provided on that particular page was for formatting purposes only, and you are free to replace that text with the other.

As members of the Committee know, when the draft resolutions are submitted, they are assigned an "L" number, and draft resolutions with "L" numbers in the symbol will indeed be the draft resolutions to be introduced by delegations.

However, in view of the concern expressed, we will definitely provide an additional explanation on that particular web page, explaining that those drafts are intended only for the purpose of providing delegations with the proper format in which they should submit draft resolutions, which in no way precludes the right of delegations to just put their own text within the format provided.

The meeting rose at 1.10 p.m.