



General Assembly

Sixty-eighth session

First Committee

21st meeting

Wednesday, 30 October 2013, 3 p.m.
New York

Official Records

Chair: Mr. Dabbashi (Libya)

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

Agenda items 89 to 107 (continued)

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

The Chair (*spoke in Arabic*): We will continue hearing from the remaining speakers on the clusters “Other disarmament measures and international security” and “Regional disarmament and security”. I urge all speakers once again to kindly keep their statements short and within the four-minute time limit.

I call on the representative of the Russian Federation to introduce draft resolution A/C.1/68/L.37.

Mr. Yermakov (Russian Federation) (*spoke in Russian*): As we can all see, in its third millennium the world is facing new technological challenges in international security. More and more often, the use of modern information and communication technologies threatens the security of citizens, society and the State, while the damage done is comparable to that inflicted by highly destructive weapons. Every Government acknowledges the intensity of military, political, terrorist and criminal threats in cyberspace.

The response to such comprehensive threats should be happening at the highest international level. In the face of such global challenges, no one can continue to feel secure. In the interdependent world of today every voice matters. We firmly believe that the United

Nations, as the universal Organization responsible for maintaining international peace and security, should continue to play a key role in the debate on international information security. It represents the interests of all States, and only within its framework can we achieve a truly global consensus on the most urgent challenges in the use of information and communications technologies.

In June, as the Committee knows, the Group of Governmental Experts on Developments in the Field of Information and Telecommunications in the Context of International Security concluded its work, in our view with very valuable results. Due to the efforts of its Australian Chair, Ms. Deborah Stokes, whose professionalism and patience are admirable, the Group produced a balanced text (see A/68/98). The report’s key achievement is that it focuses not on legitimizing inter-State conflicts in cyberspace but on preventing them. The constructive approach of the Experts from all the participating States enabled full consensus on the report.

The report of the Group of Governmental Experts is a signal achievement of the First Committee. At this point, it is important to maintain its results. In that context, the Russian Federation is introducing draft resolution A/C.1/68/L.37, entitled “Developments in the field of information and telecommunications in the context of international security”, based on our traditional resolution on international information security, which has been adopted by consensus for a number of years. We have received many constructive

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comments on ways to update it. We would like to thank all those who participated actively in the discussion.

In our work on the final draft, we tried to achieve a text that was as balanced as possible. The preamble to the draft resolution includes a paragraph noting the importance of respect for human rights and fundamental freedoms, based on the assumption that respect for human rights should be considered on a level with the principles of national sovereignty and non-interference in the internal affairs of States. We propose that a new Group of Governmental Experts be convened in 2014, in order to ensure no interruption to the dialogue process on this highly topical international problem.

The Group's 2013 report acknowledges the general applicability of international law, particularly the Charter of the United Nations, to States' activities in cyberspace, and at the same time stresses the importance of continuing study of how those standards should be applied. It also highlights the fact that additional norms could be developed over time. We propose that the Group's mandate be expanded in order to cover such vital issues as the use of information and communications technologies in conflicts and how international law should regulate States' actions in cyberspace.

We believe that it is critically important to organize future discussion on the basis of a compromise that has already been reached. Our proposed text quotes word for word from the Group's reports for 2010 (see A/65/201) and 2013 and has already been approved by all participating States. We thank all the countries that have already become sponsors of the draft resolution.

Mr. Balslev (Denmark): Let me limit myself to one issue, namely gender and disarmament.

It is widely recognized that sexual and gender-based violence carries responsibility for an unacceptably high share of human suffering in the world, not least of the suffering caused by the illicit and unregulated arms trade. That point was most recently confirmed in Security Council resolution 2117 (2013), which underlines how the illicit transfer, destabilizing accumulation and misuse of small arms and light weapons have a disproportionate impact on violence perpetrated against women and girls and exacerbates sexual and gender-based violence.

The 2012 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 similarly expressed concern about the negative impact of the illicit trade of small arms and light weapons on women and underscored the need for further integration of the role of women into efforts to combat and eradicate the illicit trade in small arms. The Arms Trade Treaty (ATT) gave the issue of gender-based violence a prominent place by reflecting it both in the preamble and in paragraph 4 of article 7, which provides that each exporting State party, when assessing risks related to an export authorization, shall take into account the risk of the conventional arms being used to commit or facilitate serious acts of gender-based violence or serious acts of violence against women and children.

In that regard also, the ATT represents a huge step forward, and we regret that that fact has not been properly reflected in several of the draft resolutions on conventional disarmament we discussed in the current and the previous cluster. That also goes for draft resolution A/C.1/68/L.7 on women, disarmament, non-proliferation and arms control, which we nevertheless co-sponsor. We must see how we can do better next year.

Recent deliberations on the issue in the United Nations system, such as in the agreed conclusions of the fifty-seventh session of the Commission on the Status of Women this spring and its resolution 2106 (2013), should also form the basis for the mainstreaming of gender awareness in the work of the First Committee. We should affirm the importance of disarmament, of women's political, social and economic empowerment and of gender equality, and emphasize the important role that can be played by women in the prevention and reduction of armed violence and armed conflict and in promoting disarmament, non-proliferation and arms control. It is our hope that we have put behind us those years where the gender perspective was largely absent from disarmament, arms control and non-proliferation processes.

Men and women are affected differently by weapons and armed conflict, and their contribution to disarmament efforts will be different and complementary. Security Council resolution 1325 (2000) recognizes that fact and obliges us to take it into account. There may be small pockets of opinion in the First Committee that still argue that those issues belong elsewhere and are not part of the core occupation of the United Nations committee responsible for disarmament and international security. They must be living on

Mars; they could not be more wrong. It is about time that that fact is reflected in our work.

Mr. Shishechiha (Islamic Republic of Iran): My delegation associates itself with the statement made by the representative of Indonesia on behalf of the Non-Aligned Movement (A/C.1/68/PV.20).

Information and telecommunication technologies and means are among the main driving forces of development in all societies. At the same time, they have the potential to be used for illegal purposes, particularly by criminals and terrorists, including to adversely affect the social, cultural, economic, political and security infrastructure and interests of States. Therefore, ensuring the constant availability, reliability, integrity and security of information and building a safe and secure information and telecommunication environment is in the interest of all nations and thus of the utmost necessity.

Accordingly, taking all appropriate national measures to prevent their use for illegal purposes is essential. Nevertheless, due to the complex nature and unique features of those technologies and means, including borderless space, speed, dynamic anonymity and rapid technological advances, it seems that ensuring the security of information and telecommunications merely through the adoption of national measures is impossible. For that reason, all States, while acting nationally, should cooperate internationally as well.

Noting the ongoing efforts within the United Nations and other international forums on the issue, the Islamic Republic of Iran is of the view that the main purpose of that process should be to develop a common understanding between the States about the importance of enhancing the security of information and telecommunications, the nature, scope and severity of threats to them and finding the ways and means to prevent those threats. The ultimate goal of that process should be the progressive development of solid international legal foundations for strengthening and ensuring the security of global information and telecommunications and preventing their use for illegal purposes. That process should be carried out based on the following principles.

As a general principle, international law is applicable and therefore should be applied to the use of information and telecommunication technologies and means by States. Nothing shall affect the sovereign right of States in the field of information

and telecommunications, including the development, acquisition, use, import and export of and access to information and telecommunications know-how, technologies and means as well as related services without restriction or discrimination.

Ensuring the security of information and telecommunications at the national level is the exclusive responsibility of individual States. However, due to the global nature of information and telecommunications, States should be encouraged to cooperate in preventing the threats resulting from their malicious use. The right of freedom of expression should be fully respected in conformity with the United Nations Charter, national laws and principles of protection of national security, public order, public health, morals and decency. States are responsible for their wrongful activities undertaken at the international level involving information and telecommunications technologies and means that is clearly attributable to them.

States should refrain under any circumstances from the use of information and telecommunications technologies and means for hostile, restrictive or other illegal purposes, including the development and use of information as a weapon; from undermining or destabilizing political, economic or social systems of other States or from eroding their cultural, moral, ethical or religious values and the transboundary dissemination of information in contravention of international law or national legislation of targeted countries.

The Chair (*spoke in Arabic*): We have heard from the last speaker in the thematic discussion on “Other disarmament measures and international security”. We will now move on to the speakers list in the thematic discussion on “Regional disarmament and security”.

Mr. Cassidy (Indonesia): I am privileged to speak on behalf of the Non-Aligned Movement (NAM).

NAM calls upon on all nuclear-weapon States to ratify all the protocols related to treaties establishing nuclear-weapon-free zones, withdraw any reservation or interpretive declaration incompatible with their object and purpose, and respect the denuclearized status of those zones.

NAM attaches great importance to peace, security and stability in the Middle East and, in that regard, strongly supports the establishment therein of a nuclear-weapon-free zone, which is essential to the maintenance and strengthening of the international peace and security. Pending its establishment, NAM

demands that Israel, the only country in the region that has not joined the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT) or declared its intention to do so, renounce any possession of nuclear weapons, accede to the NPT without precondition or further delay, and firmly place all its nuclear facilities under the full-scope safeguards of the International Atomic Energy Agency.

NAM expresses great concern over the acquisition of nuclear capability by Israel, which poses a serious and continuing threat to the security of neighbouring and other States, and condemns the country for continuing to develop and stockpile nuclear arsenals. The Movement also calls for the total and complete prohibition of the transfer of all nuclear-related equipment, information, materials, facilities, resources, devices and the extension of the assistance in the nuclear-related scientific or technological fields to Israel. NAM also supports the establishment in the Middle East of a zone free of nuclear weapons and all other weapons of mass destructions.

NAM States parties to the NPT reiterate their serious concerns over the long delay in implementing the 1995 resolution on the Middle East, which is an integral and essential part of the package of decisions reached without a vote that enabled the indefinite extension of the Treaty in 1995. They urge the sponsors of the resolution to take all the necessary measures to fully implement it without further delay. As reiterated by the Review Conference, those countries stress that the resolution will remain relevant until it has attained its goals.

NAM States parties to the NPT express their profound disappointment at the fact that the conference for the establishment of a zone free of nuclear weapons and all other weapons of mass destruction in the Middle East, which was due to be held in 2012, has not yet been convened, despite the consensus decision of the 2010 NPT Review Conference. The continuing delay in convening the conference runs contrary to the letter and spirit of the 1995 resolution. It also violates the agreement reached at the 2010 Review Conference.

While we appreciate the constructive engagement and positive reaction of all Arab countries and the Islamic Republic of Iran towards the conference, including the announcement of their willingness to participate in it, NAM States parties to the Treaty deplore the fact that Israel continues to undermine the convening of the conference by not declaring its intention to participate.

They strongly reject the alleged impediment presented by the conveners for not convening the conference on schedule, and urge them to seek out credible assurances regarding the unconditional participation of Israel and to convene the conference without any further delay in order to avoid any further possible negative repercussions on the effectiveness and credibility of the NPT, its 2015 review process and the nuclear disarmament and non-proliferation regime as a whole.

In conclusion, NAM underlines that it considers the establishment of the nuclear-weapon-free zone to be an important measure towards achieving global nuclear disarmament and nuclear non-proliferation objectives. In that regard, NAM urges the conclusion of agreements freely arrived at among States of the region concerned with a view to establishing new nuclear-weapon-free zones in regions where they do not exist, taking into account the final document of the first special session of the General Assembly devoted to disarmament (resolution S-10/2) and the 1999 United Nations Disarmament Commission's principles and guidelines. At the same time, NAM stresses that the establishment of such zones does not substitute for the legal obligations of the nuclear-weapon States for the total elimination of their weapons.

Ms. Richards (Jamaica): I thank you, Mr. Chair, for giving me the floor to address the Committee under the "Regional disarmament and security" cluster. I have the honour to speak on behalf of the 14 Caribbean Community (CARICOM) member States.

The States members of CARICOM have adopted a cooperative, coordinated and practical approach at the regional and subregional levels in order to tackle the various security threats posed to the region. CARICOM also remains committed to playing its part in global efforts to maintain our collective security by implementing our international obligations.

At the subregional level, CARICOM continued to build on its framework to support regional action on security matters with the adoption in February of the CARICOM Crime and Security Strategy. The trafficking of illegal guns and their associated ammunition has been identified in the Strategy as one of the greatest threats to regional security. Much has been previously outlined with respect to the region's efforts to address that threat, including through the adoption by CARICOM Heads of State of a declaration on small arms and light weapons in 2011 and the region's strong support for the inclusion of small arms

and light weapons and their ammunition in the Arms Trade Treaty.

In terms of practical measures, we are pleased that the CARICOM Implementation Agency for Crime and Security has made progress with operationalizing the newly created Regional Integrated Ballistic Information Network, with four member States adopting the Network through critical support provided by our bilateral partners. The Network will allow CARICOM member States to identify and trace guns and ammunition used to commit crimes.

Other practical measures to combat the illicit trafficking in small arms and light weapons are being pursued through the region's continued participation in the Organization of American States project "Promoting Firearms Marking in Latin America and the Caribbean". The project, which is supported by the Government of the United States, has seen the delivery of electronic marking equipment and computers to store marking data, as well as relevant training for 11 CARICOM member States over the past two years.

The United Nations Regional Centre for Peace, Disarmament and Development in Latin America and the Caribbean (UNLIREC) continues to be an important partner for CARICOM. The Centre has assisted member States in enhancing the capacity of our law enforcement and judicial personnel, improving our stockpile management capabilities, and aligning our national legislation with global and regional instruments. Currently, UNLIREC is implementing the second phase of its firearms destruction and stockpile assistance package for Caribbean States. Under this programme, UNLIREC has delivered training for Government officials on best practices in firearms stockpile management and supported the development of national plans of action for stockpile management and small-arms destruction equipment. CARICOM wishes to commend UNLIREC for its efforts in the areas of armed violence prevention and mainstreaming gender perspectives in various disarmament projects being carried out throughout the region.

CARICOM has also taken a regional approach to the implementation of Security Council resolution 1540 (2004) through the CARICOM-United Nations 1540 implementation programme, which we consider to be a platform for broader efforts to prevent terrorists from acquiring, trafficking and using weapons of mass destruction, as well as for meeting our international obligations and commitments. Two critical areas of

continued focus under this programme are augmenting the legal framework for effective regional systems of export controls and enhancing the capacity of security sector and customs and border officials.

Finally, CARICOM welcomes strengthening the Caribbean programme of the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC). We hope that this regional programme will serve as the basis for the re-establishment of a permanent UNODC office in our region.

Though our region has limited resources with which to confront the various complex security challenges attendant on porous borders, expansive maritime and land boundaries in a geographic location that is in a transit zone, we have developed a number of partnerships to give realization to regional disarmament through a number of practical measures.

Mr. Hasan (Bahrain) (*spoke in Arabic*): The delegation of the Kingdom of Bahrain is delivering this statement on behalf of the Group of Arab States. The Arab Group also supports the statement made by the representative of Indonesia on behalf of the Non-Aligned Movement (see A/C.1/68/PV.20).

With regard to regional disarmament and security, the Group reiterates that the continued presence of nuclear weapons constitutes a threat to humankind. Nuclear disasters that are caused by these weapons could transform several regions of the world into mass graves. Since the Middle East is considered to be one of the tensest regions of the world, we must all seek to make it free of nuclear weapons by implementing the resolution adopted at the 1995 Review and Extension Conference of the Parties to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT), and the resolution adopted at the 2010 NPT Review Conference on the convening of a conference in 2012 to create a zone free of nuclear weapons and other weapons of mass destruction in the Middle East.

The preparation process for the 2015 NPT Review Conference has begun. The process is now reviewing progress made in implementing obligations under the action plan adopted at the 2010 Review Conference, which have become evermore urgent, especially the fourth section of the outcome document, which pertains to the Middle East. That is a reflection of the international community's consensus on requesting the Secretary-General and the three convener States to hold a conference in 2012 in order to create a zone

free of nuclear weapons and other weapons of mass destruction in the Middle East.

Arab States participated actively in all of the negotiations and consultations held by Ambassador Jaakko Laajava, the facilitator of the postponed conference. They submitted written statements in that regard, most recently the report submitted by Libya on behalf of the League of Arab States to the Secretariat on Arab efforts towards that end. In addition, the Arab Group maintains continuous contact with the Secretary-General and the three depositary countries, as the parties that called for such a conference to be held, and takes other steps with a view to laying the groundwork for the success of the conference. Arab States have also launched initiatives at the International Atomic Energy Agency.

These States stand ready to play their part in holding the postponed conference as soon as possible in 2013, with the participation of all countries of the Middle East. Such a conference would launch the process of establishing a zone free of nuclear weapons and all other weapons of mass destruction in the Middle East as an integral part of the implementation of the Action Plan emanating from the 2010 Review Conference of the Parties to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons. These commitments will be evaluated in the 2015 Review Conference.

The States Members of the United Nations will monitor and follow up on the responsibility of the convening parties, which are primarily responsible for ensuring that obligations are met and that a comprehensive definition of civil society is applied, including non-governmental organizations, parliamentarians, academics and research institutions. Efforts must be made to raise public awareness of commitments and awaken the global conscience to the need to rid the Middle East of nuclear weapons. Moreover, the Arab Group reaffirms its political will to ensure the success of the conference and that the situation in the Middle East must not be used as an excuse to delay the holding of the conference. We underscore the need for the same political will to be shown by all States calling for the conference.

Mr. Eberhardt (United States of America): My oral remarks are significantly shortened as I invite delegations to obtain a fuller text on the United States Mission to the United Nations and the QuickFirst websites.

Years of experience have affirmed that non-proliferation and disarmament initiatives at the global and regional levels are mutually reinforcing. We commend the many regional efforts of States to demonstrate their commitment to all three of the pillars of the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT), including through the establishment of nuclear-weapon-free zone treaties in Latin America and the Caribbean, Africa, South-East Asia, Central Asia and the South Pacific. The establishment of nuclear-weapon-free zones on the basis of arrangements freely arrived at among the States of the region concerned, and in accordance with the 1999 United Nations Disarmament Commission guidelines, enhances global and regional peace and security, strengthens the global nuclear non-proliferation regime, contributes to the goal of nuclear disarmament and facilitates regional cooperation in the peaceful uses of nuclear energy.

The United States welcomed the opportunity to participate in the Second Conference of States Parties to the Treaty of Pelindaba last year, where we reaffirmed our commitment to the Treaty and also welcomed the important work of regional organizations.

The United States sees great value in collaborative approaches across the whole spectrum of arms control initiatives, including conventional arms, biosecurity and nuclear security. We have made a serious investment in building the current security architecture in Europe. As members may know, the three pillars of the regime in Europe — the Open Skies Treaty, the Vienna Document 2011 on confidence- and security-building measures, and the Treaty on Conventional Armed Forces in Europe — together contribute to greater confidence for all of Europe and provide a foundation for stability in our strategic relationships.

The Conventional Armed Forces in Europe (CFE) regime remains important to the United States and for European security as a whole, despite the fact that Russia ceased implementation of its CFE obligations in December 2007. After trying for several years to convince Russia to resume implementation, in November 2011 the United States and our NATO allies that are party to the Treaty, as well as Georgia and Moldova, ceased carrying out certain obligations under the CFE Treaty with regard to Russia. In the face of today's security challenges, we and our NATO allies are committed to finding a way forward to preserve, strengthen and modernize conventional arms control, based on key principles and commitments. We must

adapt and improve our efforts to meet our current and future security needs and do so in a way that is efficient and effective for all countries involved.

Also in the western hemisphere, the Organization of American States (OAS) member States are working together using workshops and exercises to enhance their bio-incident readiness and response capabilities. Since 2009, the Inter-American Committee against Terrorism (CICTE) has led several bio-incident management exercises aimed at raising awareness of biosecurity threats. As a result of the success and benefits of the OAS/CICTE secretariat's work, the programme is expected to expand throughout the region, where Member States have specifically requested further assistance in drafting and/or reviewing their national emergency response plans related to bioterrorism. In the next phase, this programme intends to employ regional best-practice exchanges for countries to share experiences and tools, drawing on expertise from public and private sector experts from around the world.

In East Asia, the regional non-proliferation and disarmament architecture has steadily developed and increasingly matured to address the challenges to the global regime. The Regional Forum of the Association of the Southeast Asian Nations (ARF) now holds an annual intersessional meeting on non-proliferation and disarmament focusing on each of the three pillars of the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons. This new structure has led to periodic ARF workshops, offering opportunities for concrete cooperation on topics such as Security Council resolution 1540 (2004) implementation, nuclear forensics best practices, and biosafety and biosecurity. In addition, the East Asia Summit has emerged as a premier forum for discussing regional security and non-proliferation issues, and these topics have featured prominently at the last two summits.

Many delegations have mentioned proliferation crises in the Middle East and North-East Asia, and concerns regarding strategic stability in South Asia. The United States fully supports the goal of a Middle East free of all weapons of mass destruction (WMD) and their means of delivery, and we stand by our commitment to work with the States of the region to convene as soon as possible a conference on the establishment of a WMD-free zone in the Middle East. We have worked tirelessly with Ambassador Laajava, the United Kingdom, Russia and the United Nations to

make a meaningful conference a reality, but WMD-free zones cannot be imposed from the outside.

The United States is firmly committed to fulfilling our obligations and working with the international community to take the next steps on the long road to general and complete disarmament.

Mr. Al-Shaheen (Kuwait) (*spoke in Arabic*): In the interests of time, my full statement can be accessed online. At the outset, I would like to associate my delegation with the statements delivered by the representative of Bahrain, on behalf of the Group of Arab States, and by the representative of Indonesia, on behalf of the Non-Aligned Movement.

The Committee is fully aware of the dangers posed by the weapons of mass destruction that are proliferating throughout the world. Nowhere in the world is safe from the potential consequences of the use of such weapons, be they chemical, radiological, biological or nuclear. The peaceful coexistence of peoples can be guaranteed only by the complete elimination of all arsenals of weapons of mass destruction. We in Kuwait, like the people of all other States, are keen to rid our region of such weapons. This is a priority in the Middle East.

We therefore call on the international community to work towards the goal of creating a Middle East zone free of nuclear weapons and other weapons of destruction — a goal that can be achieved only when all parties in the region respect that objective, which has been a matter of global agreement since the 1995 NPT Review and Extension Conference. It was stressed by the international community once again in 2010. The hopes for creating a safer and more secure world have receded. That is why the international community's call to hold such a conference in Helsinki represented major progress. However, the conference was not convened, despite our expectations for its success and the prospect that it would eventually have led to the creation of a Middle East zone free of nuclear weapons and other weapons of mass destruction.

However, Israel refused to participate in the conference and it was not held. Therefore, the international community should call upon Israel to sign the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons, which is a main pillar and cornerstone of the disarmament machinery. Israel, as the only nuclear-weapon State of the region, should also subject all its nuclear facilities to the comprehensive safeguards regime of the International Atomic Energy Agency

(IAEA), abide by all relevant Security Council resolutions and facilitate the international community's desire to free the Middle East region from weapons of mass destruction.

The State of Kuwait supports fruitful cooperation and transparent relations between the Islamic Republic of Iran and the International Atomic Energy Agency during the coming period. In that regard, the implementation of an international agreement would have a significant positive impact on the Arab Gulf region in particular and the Middle East in general, and on the entire world as a whole. Positive reports of the IAEA with regard to the Iranian nuclear issue would strengthen confidence, encourage stability and dispel uncertainty in that tense region. In that connection, we reassert the inalienable right of all States to use nuclear energy for peaceful purposes, without discrimination and without infringing on States' sovereignty. It greatly benefits all humankind. It can be used in technology, electricity, medicine and for other peaceful purposes.

Mr. Al Qassimi (United Arab Emirates) (*spoke in Arabic*): The United Arab Emirates aligns itself with the statements delivered earlier on behalf of the Non-Aligned Movement and the Group of Arab States on regional disarmament.

In that context, we once again reiterate our deep concern regarding the international community's inability to achieve any tangible progress or desired results pertaining to regional disarmament, especially in the Middle East.

The decision of the 2010 Review Conference of the Parties to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons to convene a conference devoted to the establishment of a zone free from nuclear weapons and other weapons of mass destruction in the Middle East has yet to be fulfilled. We therefore call upon the organizers to convene the conference at the earliest possible date.

Given the evident importance of the aforementioned issue to the vast majority of Member States, the United Arab Emirates underscores that it must remain a top international priority. That is especially true in light of the changes that the Middle East has witnessed. Prompt implementation by the international community of all commitments is required. Let us also be mindful of the devastating global impact of nuclear weapons and other weapons of mass destruction, which know no boundaries.

We also call upon Israel, the only State in the region that possesses nuclear weapon and that has not yet acceded to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons, to do so as early as possible. That would be a step towards achieving peace in the Middle East. The United Arab Emirates has held constructive consultations with the coordinator of the conference, Ambassador Jaakko Laajava, and will continue doing so, while redoubling its own efforts.

In that regard, we call upon the international community to maintain its efforts in the ongoing process aimed at the establishment of a zone free of nuclear weapons and other weapons of mass destruction in the Middle East. We also encourage the complementary initiatives to speed up the existing process. The United Arab Emirates commends in particular the initiative of sisterly Egypt, which was launched during the sixty-eighth session of the General Assembly, and which aimed at declaring the Middle East a zone free of weapons of mass destruction. We reiterate our full readiness to contribute to the success of that initiative.

Mr. Louis (Colombia) (*spoke in Spanish*): While disarmament, non-proliferation and arms regulation are global objectives, their implementation at the regional and national levels is necessary in order to strengthen security in all aspects and to guarantee the effective implementation of existing international instruments in that area.

At the national level, I can inform members that my country has renounced the use of weapons of mass destruction. That alone is a significant fact, but it is even more important that all Latin American States, for peaceful purposes and faced with the possibility of the Latin American region becoming the site of a nuclear confrontation, entered into a legal agreement, under the Treaty of Tlateloco, to establish the first nuclear-weapon-free zone in a densely populated area by refraining from the use of those weapons and maintaining nuclear energy for exclusively peaceful purposes. The political will of the 33 Latin American and Caribbean States made that regional achievement possible. The Agency for the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons in Latin America and the Caribbean — OPANAL — is the body that has guaranteed and promoted that initiative.

I would like to refer to the initiative leading to the establishment of a zone free of nuclear weapons and other weapons of mass destruction in the Middle East, which is being promoted by a number of States in the region, as well as internationally by the General

Assembly. My country underscores the need to promptly convene a conference to address the establishment of a zone free from nuclear weapons and other weapons of mass destruction in the region, with the understanding that we consider it essential to establish new nuclear-weapon-free zones in the regions in which they do not currently exist, in accordance with the guidelines and principles established by the Disarmament Commission in its 1999 report, through arrangements freely agreed upon by the concerned States.

We cannot refer to disarmament and regional security without underscoring the work carried out by the regional organizations, either independently or as part of collective efforts. Colombia wishes first to highlight the work carried out by the Organization of American States (OAS), as the OAS General Assembly, during its forty-third session, adopted resolution 2809, entitled "Advancing hemispheric security: a multidimensional approach". That resolution addresses, *inter alia*, disarmament affairs in terms of both conventional weapons and weapons of mass destruction. It reiterates the mandates handed down by the General Assembly on those issues and calls upon member States to continue contributing towards achieving the objectives enshrined in the resolution by presenting reports, exchanging information, adopting national measures, implementing confidence-building measures and lending support and mutual assistance.

The resolution is particularly important to my country in that it encourages the States of the region to develop synergies between the Technical Secretariat of the Inter-American Convention Against the Illicit Manufacturing of and Trafficking in Firearms, Ammunition, Explosives, and Other Related Materials and the various entities, bodies and mechanisms to address the problem of the illicit manufacture and trafficking of those devices. That is a key issue for Colombia, as we are well acquainted with the harmful effects of the illicit trafficking in small arms, ammunition and explosives.

In addition, as our country has been affected by the use of anti-personnel mines as a result of the actions of illegal armed groups, we support the objective laid out in the resolution to establish a zone free of anti-personnel mines in the Americas. To that end, we have worked at the national level to rid our territory of landmines. Thanks to the Humanitarian Demining Battalion and working with civilian demining organizations, we are prepared to share our experience with the

various components of the Comprehensive Action against Antipersonnel Mines. We call for international assistance and cooperation in that area, as enshrined in the Ottawa Convention and in the aforementioned resolution. We would like to express our gratitude for the Comprehensive Action against Antipersonnel Mines of the OAS.

Mr. Messone (Gabon) (*spoke in French*): As this is the first time I am taking the floor, I would like to congratulate you, Mr. Chair, and the members of the Bureau, on your election and to assure you of the support of my delegation.

I align myself with the statements made by the representatives of Indonesia and Nigeria on behalf of the Non-Aligned Movement and the African Group, respectively.

Gabon's position on disarmament issues is directly linked to our commitment to peace and multilateralism, and to our belief in the central role of the United Nations as an Organization that represents the people of the world and guarantees the best management of contemporary security matters and concerns. I recall my country's commitment to the United Nations Disarmament Conference, the only multilateral negotiating body for complete and universal disarmament.

The year 2013 has been noteworthy for the adoption of the Arms Trade Treaty (ATT), an instrument that represents a major success that crowns years of efforts to better regulate the international arms trade and fill gaps in the international legal system by establishing shared rules and principles in that area. Gabon has already signed the Treaty and urges all countries of Central Africa to follow suit to ensure its earliest possible entry into force and the complete implementation of the United Nations Programme of Action to Prevent, Combat and Eradicate the Illicit Trade in Small Arms and Light Weapons in All Its Aspects.

I recall that the issue of small arms and light weapons and all their aspects in our region constitutes not only a permanent threat to peace, economic development and accelerated progress towards democracy, but also a major obstacle to good governance and an environment favourable to sustainable development.

On 7 December 2012, on the occasion of the twentieth anniversary of the United Nations Standing Advisory Committee on Security Questions in Central Africa, the States members of the Economic Community of Central African States (ECCAS) held a

meeting in Brazzaville under the theme “Two decades of peacebuilding in Central Africa”. Above and beyond paying homage and expressing gratitude to the United Nations — in particular through the Department of Political Affairs, the Office for Disarmament Affairs and the United Nations Regional Office for Central Africa — that celebration was also the occasion to call attention to the Committee’s contribution within the framework of confidence-building measures across the region.

The Committee has promoted the development of legal and judicial frameworks for peace and security in the subregion by means of subregional and international legal instruments. In that light, it constitutes a source of assistance for the countries of ECCAS, for which it serves as a forum for the exchange and discussion aimed at promoting our security and issues at the subregional, national and international levels, including the fight against terrorism and the non-proliferation of weapons, piracy at sea and armed robbery in the Gulf of Guinea, and the new problem of industrial poaching in the subregion. Industrial poaching is becoming an ecological and economic challenge and constitutes both a transnational crime and a security threat to all our States, as the President of Gabon recalled at the general debate (see A/68/PV.6).

Finally, the work of the Committee makes Central African security issues, as well as Member States’ proposed solutions to them, more visible to the international community. The Committee’s future will depend to a great extent — starting with its thirty-seventh meeting, to be held in early December in N’Djamena — on our willingness to work harder for revitalization, ownership and security cooperation among the States members of ECCAS. That is essentially the message of the biennial draft resolution on confidence-building measures in the regional and subregional context (A/C.1/68/L.51), submitted by Rwanda on behalf of the States members of ECCAS, which we hope will be adopted by consensus.

Mr. Hashmi (Pakistan): The General Assembly has long recognized that global peace and security depend in large measure on stability at the regional and subregional levels. In the post-Cold-War era, most threats to peace and security arise among States located in the same region or subregion. Therefore, regional approaches to disarmament and arms control are both essential and complementary to international and bilateral efforts.

The Final Document of the first special session of the General Assembly devoted to disarmament (resolution S-10/2), the United Nations Disarmament Commission and this Committee’s resolutions have repeatedly reaffirmed the need for the simultaneous pursuit of regional and global approaches, including agreements in the area of disarmament and arms limitation. Through those mechanisms and normative frameworks, the international community has endorsed two well-recognized and tested tools — conventional arms control and confidence-building measures, particularly at the regional and subregional levels.

Several regions of the world have benefitted from the application of principles and guidelines in the areas of conventional arms control and confidence-building measures evolved and agreed at the United Nations. It is important to recall and reiterate some of those principles, which include the preservation of balance in the defence capabilities of States at the lowest level of armaments and military forces, and the special responsibility of militarily significant States and States with larger military capabilities in promoting agreements for regional security, undiminished security and the pursuit of disarmament measures in an equitable and balanced manner. Regional arrangements for disarmament and arms limitation should accord priority to addressing the most destabilizing military capabilities and imbalances in the conventional and non-conventional fields alike.

Over the years, confidence-building measures have proven their utility and efficacy in several regions and subregions, including in the area of arms control, disarmament and, more broadly, for international peace and security. As the General Assembly’s resolutions and Disarmament Commission guidelines have affirmed, confidence-building measures at the regional level have to be tailored to the specifics of the region and should begin with simple arrangements on transparency, openness and risk reduction before the concerned States find themselves in a position to pursue more substantive arms control and disarmament measures. However, regardless of the specifics of different regions and the steps the concerned States undertake for confidence-building, the ultimate aim of regional approaches should be to enhance regional and global peace and security.

However, confidence-building measures should not become an end in themselves. They should be pursued in conjunction with earnest efforts for the peaceful

settlement of disputes in accordance with the Charter of the United Nations. The peaceful settlement of disputes in accordance with the purposes and principles of the Charter of the United Nations and other concrete actions to ease regional tensions and build confidence among the States of the region can create a political environment conducive to promoting agreements on disarmament and arms limitation. Without progress towards eliminating underlying disputes and causes of mistrust between States, the utility of confidence-building measures will diminish. Confidence-building measures alone cannot serve as a substitute or precondition for steps towards the peaceful settlement of disputes.

Pakistan feels privileged to have spearheaded initiatives on regional disarmament, conventional arms control and confidence-building measures at the United Nations for several years now. Pakistan's three resolutions on regional disarmament, conventional arms control and confidence-building measures at the regional and subregional levels are a practical expression of promoting those globally agreed goals.

As in previous years, the delegation of Pakistan has sponsored the draft resolutions entitled "Regional disarmament" (A/C.1/68/L.50); "Confidence-building measures in the regional and subregional context" (A/C.1/68/L.51); and "Conventional arms control at the regional and subregional levels" (A/C.1/68/L.52). Those draft resolutions recognize the significance of regional approaches to arms control, disarmament and confidence-building for international peace and stability, and the complementarity between regional and global approaches. On behalf of the sponsors of those draft resolutions, we look forward to the continued support of Member States in their adoption this year as well.

Mr. Huseynli (Azerbaijan): Azerbaijan aligns itself with the statement delivered earlier on behalf of the Non-Aligned Movement. I would like to make a national statement on some important issues for my country.

Conventional arms control regimes are important requirements for ensuring stability, predictability and transparency in the military sphere. As a complex political and military arrangement, any conventional arms control regime requires a high degree of commitment on the part of States parties to its underlying principles, as well as respect for the norms and principles of international law, which constitutes the basic foundation of any arms control regime.

Azerbaijan has not ratified the 1992 Tashkent Agreement on the Principles and Procedures for the Implementation of the Treaty on Conventional Armed Forces in Europe. Nevertheless, Azerbaijan has been voluntarily applying and observing all the provisions of the Treaty and promoting transparency by participating in regular information exchanges and receiving inspections. Azerbaijan is actively engaged in the ongoing discussions on the future of the conventional arms control regime in Europe aimed at overcoming the current stalemate around the Treaty.

Confidence-building measures are valuable tools for fostering mutual trust among States. They should be implemented in a way that ensures the right of every State to equal security, guaranteeing that no individual State or group of States obtains advantages over others. Confidence-building measures should not be taken out of their overall political and security contexts, particularly when conflict zones fall within the area of application. They can be effective only when there is genuine commitment on the part of States to peace and stability, supported by concrete actions that inspire confidence. As a participating State in the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE), Azerbaijan regularly engages in information-sharing and submits reports. It has received on-site inspection, evaluation and observation visits under OSCE's Document 2011 on Confidence- and Security-Building Measures.

Concerning small arms and light weapons (SALW), Azerbaijan attaches the utmost importance to full implementation of the United Nations Programme of Action to Prevent, Combat and Eradicate the Illicit Trade in Small Arms and Light Weapons in All Its Aspects, as well as the 2005 International Tracing Instrument. At the regional level, we stress the relevance of the OSCE Document on Small Arms and Light Weapons and its important contribution to tackling the issue in the OSCE area. As a member of the Security Council, Azerbaijan contributed to and supported the adoption of resolution 2117 (2013), the Council's first-ever resolution on small arms and light weapons. My country takes all the appropriate measures at the national, regional and global levels to implement its SALW-related obligations. Azerbaijan stands for transparency and responsible behaviour in the global trade in SALW and conventional weaponry.

Azerbaijan's efforts at the national and international levels to ensure the implementation of mechanisms

in the areas of arms control, disarmament and confidence-building measures are seriously hampered by Armenia's continued aggression against our country. Armenia flagrantly violates the fundamental principles of the Treaty on Conventional Armed Forces in Europe on the non-use of force against the territorial integrity and political independence of a State and on host-nation consent. Armenia's attempts to mislead the international community by making calls for initiating various confidence-building measures with Azerbaijan, including in the military and economic fields, are counter-productive. Any confidence-building measures with Armenia will not be considered unless Armenia withdraws its armed forces from Azerbaijan's occupied territories and engages constructively in negotiations for settling the conflict.

Azerbaijan has repeatedly drawn the international community's attention to the illegal transfer of SALW and other conventional weaponry to the occupied territories of my country. We urge all States to refrain from, condemn and prevent such illegal activities, which Azerbaijan's territorial integrity and sovereignty, and erode the prospects for peace in our region. Despite all the difficulties that the current situation presents for our country, Azerbaijan is fully committed to doing its utmost to help restore peace and stability in the South Caucasus.

Mr. Sareer (Maldives): The Maldives has always shown its unequivocal support for disarmament initiatives, including regional disarmament. We support the creation of nuclear-weapon-free zones, especially in volatile regions such as the Middle East. In that regard, we welcome Security Council resolution 2118 (2013) of 27 September on the destruction of chemical weapons in Syria and its continuing and timely implementation on the ground by the Organization for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons.

The Maldives has supported the establishment of the Indian Ocean as a zone of peace since the decision was made in 1971 (resolution 2832 (XXVI)), 42 years ago. Since the adoption of the Declaration, the Cold War power dynamics and the context of issues prevalent in the region have changed significantly. However, new challenges and new dynamics have arisen, yielding new threats to security that re-emphasize the importance of the Declaration's goals. We thus reiterate our support for the goal of ensuring establishment of the conditions for peace, security and stability in the Indian Ocean region and for those goals' full realization, in line with

emerging security challenges and threats within the region.

Among the important new challenges that the States of the Indian Ocean are dealing with today is piracy, as the report of the 455th meeting of the Ad Hoc Committee on the Indian Ocean highlights (A/68/29). As the smallest State in the region, the Maldives is susceptible to any instability there, and the increasing incidence of piracy in the Indian Ocean is therefore a major concern. The Maldives relies heavily on tourism and fisheries for a major source of its income, and incidents of piracy therefore signal a potential threat to our country and economy. We therefore reiterate our thanks for the United Nations Trust Fund's approval of a \$2 million package of projects in support of anti-piracy efforts in Somalia and other affected States in the region, including the Maldives. We would also like to highlight the commitment of the South Asian Association for Regional Cooperation to combating piracy.

The use of the Indian Ocean for illegally transporting weapons by terrorists and militant groups and for conducting acts of terror, drug trafficking and other transnational organized crimes, as well as illegal fishing, is also a major concern for my country. In 2007, the Maldives National Defence Force intercepted and captured a vessel full of weapons and ammunition in Maldivian waters. Such incidents are a further indication of the urgent need for recognition of the maritime dimensions of security issues. Furthermore, in recent years, transnational criminal organizations and groups have used Maldivian territorial waters for drug trafficking.

As was also stated in the Ad Hoc Committee's report, sea temperatures in the Indian Ocean are rising faster than anywhere else in the world, and the effects of climate change, especially sea levels, are threatening the very existence of low-lying communities. For a nation where 80 per cent of the territory is barely one and a half metres above sea level, this is the ultimate security threat, the very heart of our survival.

We believe there is a significant need for countries of the Indian Ocean to unify on a single platform to work towards an integrated approach to addressing such challenges. The Maldives is actively engaged in various international forums, aimed at enhancing its role in the global maritime arena. It was one of the first nations to sign the Djibouti Code of Conduct for suppressing piracy

and armed robbery in the western Indian Ocean. We are also a member of the Indian Ocean Naval Symposium, whose work includes promoting the understanding of mutual maritime issues among the littoral States of the Indian Ocean, and the Contact Group on Piracy off the Coast of Somalia.

It is our hope that through step-by-step cooperation between the countries of the Indian Ocean and other concerned Powers, we will be able to find practical ways of fulfilling the aspirations of our peoples towards making the Indian Ocean a zone of peace and shared prosperity.

Mr. Nazarian (Armenia): Armenia attaches great importance to regional disarmament and the efforts of the United Nations to establish international and regional security and stability and an atmosphere of confidence through that process. We strongly believe that confidence-building measures are a key element in creating and maintaining peace and security at the regional and subregional levels. It should also be mentioned that a willingness to engage in implementing such measures is an indicator of a genuine desire on the part of the sides to a conflict to pursue a path of peaceful and negotiated solutions. Armenia is a strong supporter of the United Nations efforts aimed at promoting confidence-building measures.

We have consistently supported all the relevant General Assembly resolutions relating to peace and security at the international, regional and subregional levels, the peaceful resolution of conflicts, and confidence- and security-building measures in the regional and subregional contexts, which specifically recall Member States' obligation to refrain from the threat or use of force and to settle their disputes by peaceful means. Furthermore, Armenia is convinced that resources released by disarmament, including at the regional level, can be devoted to sustainable economic and social development and to tackling environmental issues for the benefit of all peoples, particularly those living in conflict-prone societies.

We consider disarmament and arms control to be major elements of global and regional security systems. To make those systems work, we must act responsibly to work together to counteract the reckless militaristic ambitions of some States. It is totally unacceptable when threats of attempting to resolve a conflict by military means are made at the highest levels. Just last month, the Azerbaijani leadership once again came up with a new threat against Armenian Nagorno Karabakh.

Azerbaijan continues to reject our proposals to sign an agreement on the non-use of force and is disregarding the calls of the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE) to bolster the fragile yet critical ceasefire agreement. Today we are witnessing an unprecedented growth in our neighbour's military budget, which has increased dramatically over the past few years. Such enormous growth in military expenditure testifies to Azerbaijan's intention to derail the peaceful settlement of the Nagorno Karabakh issue.

Azerbaijan rejects not only the basic principles of a peaceful settlement, but also confidence-building measures proposed by the Co-Chairs of the OSCE Minsk Group on the strengthening of the ceasefire, the withdrawal of snipers from the line of contact and the establishment of mechanisms to investigate ceasefire violations. Azerbaijan also periodically organizes provocations on the line of contact with Nagorno Karabakh and on the border with Armenia, which result in new casualties.

For the past two decades, developments in our region have demonstrated yet again that the use of force cannot bring about a durable solution to the existing conflicts. No alternative exists to conflict resolution except political compromise arising from negotiations, based on the ultimate commitment of the parties to the non-use of force. Regardless of Azerbaijan's destructive stance, Armenia will continue its efforts towards a settlement of the Nagorno Karabakh issue exclusively through peaceful means, based on the purposes and principles enshrined in the Charter of the United Nations and on the basis of provisions of statements by the presidents of the three co-Chair countries.

In conclusion, let me emphasize that Armenia remains fully committed to its international obligations on arms control and disarmament. We believe in the inviolability and efficiency of the United Nations instruments in enhancing trust, confidence-building and promoting regional dialogue and cooperation.

Ms. Tin Marlar Myint (Myanmar): I shall present a brief version of my delegation's statement. A full version will be available on the QuikFirst website.

My delegation would like to express its appreciation to the Deputy to the High Representative for Disarmament Affairs and the Directors of the United Nations Regional Centre for Peace, Disarmament and Development in Latin America and the Caribbean, the United Nations Regional Centre for Peace and

Disarmament in Asia and the Pacific, and the United Nations Regional Centre for Peace and Disarmament in Africa for their presentations (see A/C.1/68/PV.18). We look forward to working with them and other delegations to further the work of the First Committee.

Myanmar supports the revitalization of the Regional Centres and the important role they are playing in the promotion of disarmament, non-proliferation and arms control measures at the regional level, thereby strengthening durable peace and sustainable development in the regions concerned. The workshops, seminars and other regional interactive dialogues organized by the Regional Centres play a vital role in the dissemination and sharing of concepts, ideas and action plans developed at the United Nations and other international disarmament forums. We are well aware that different regions have different priorities and approaches.

To promote durable peace and sustainable development, Member States, the Office for Disarmament Affairs and the donor community should focus more on using a community-based approach in conducting their business, while also maintaining their current regional activities. We will continue to need voluntary budgetary contributions from States Members of the United Nations and other interested organizations and individuals to meet the staffing requirements and basic administrative costs of the Regional Centres and their endeavours. Only when Member States and other donors provide adequate funding will the Regional Centres be able to sustain their activities in the cause of disarmament and non-proliferation.

Since the world is changing and new security challenges are emerging, it is no longer an option but an imperative for countries to come together to address international disarmament and security issues. Where there is a will, there is a way. Together, let us try to create a more secure world.

The Chair: I call on the representative of Algeria to introduce draft resolution A/C.1/68/L.19).

Mr. Moktefi (Algeria) (*spoke in Arabic*): My delegation is committed to making international peace and security part and parcel of our foreign policy. Guided by that commitment at the international level, Algeria is pursuing its efforts to foster confidence-building measures and encourage dialogue in the light of its traditional cooperation with many regional groups, including the Mediterranean States that participate in

these meetings. Algeria therefore supports the African Nuclear-Weapon-Free Zone Treaty, which contributes considerably to nuclear disarmament, security and peace in Africa and greatly enhances peace and security in North Africa and the Mediterranean region.

My delegation welcomes the active role played by the United Nations Regional Centre for Peace and Disarmament in Africa, as noted in the report of the Secretary-General (A/68/114). The Regional Centre is well known for its continent-wide activities, which cover many issues relating to peace and disarmament. It has provided invaluable expertise to Africa. In addition to the continental reach of its programmes, it has fostered partnerships with national and African organizations that cooperate closely with it. On the basis of those achievements, we express our full support for the Regional Centre.

Given the current situation in the Sahel arising from terrorist threats and the illegal trafficking in weapons, the States of the region should redouble their efforts and foster regional cooperation to combat those scourges, especially terrorism. The international community must extend its full support and assistance to the Sahel States.

It is clear that the challenges and dangers that threaten the stability of the continent may adversely affect the Mediterranean region. My delegation welcomes the Secretary-General's report "Strengthening of security and cooperation in the Mediterranean region" (A/66/122). We thank those States that have extended assistance in light of resolution 67/75, in line with our Mediterranean policy, based on good-neighbourliness, cooperation, amity and mutual trust.

As in the past, Algeria is honoured to introduce the draft resolution "Strengthening of security and cooperation in the Mediterranean region" (A/C.1/68/L.19), under agenda item 104. It is basically the same text as last year. Resolution 67/75 emphasizes once again that security in the Mediterranean is closely related to security in Europe and the international community. We rely on the full cooperation and the support of all States to adopt this draft resolution by consensus, given the current developments unfolding in the Mediterranean region.

Mr. Mana (Cameroon) (*spoke in French*): My delegation aligns itself with the statement made earlier on behalf of the Non-Aligned Movement and with that just made by the Permanent Representative of Gabon

on behalf of the States members of the Economic Community of Central African States (ECCAS).

As at every session, the Central African region wishes to comment on the confidence-building measures that it is adopting at the regional level and to introduce a draft resolution. This time, the Republic of Rwanda, current Chair of the United Nations Standing Advisory Committee on Security Questions in Central Africa, has the honour of carrying out that task. In support of that joint initiative, my delegation wishes to make a brief statement in its national capacity.

The situation in Central Africa is characterized by long-standing hotbeds of tension and new kinds of threats to regional peace and stability. In the context of the traditional impediments to peace, the well-known porous borders, both in times of war and of peace, the repercussions of the crisis in the Sahel region and, regrettably, the many recurring problems in the Central African Republic are fed by, among other things, the illicit proliferation of weapons, in particular small arms and light weapons.

In order to address such issues, the Central African States agreed, among others measures, the Central African Convention for the Control of Small Arms and Light Weapons, their Ammunition and all Parts and Components that can be used for their Manufacture, Repair and Assembly, or the Kinshasa Convention, adopted unanimously at the 31st ministerial meeting of the United Nations Standing Advisory Committee on Security Questions in Central Africa. The upcoming deposit of the ratification instrument by the Republic of Cameroon once again demonstrates my country's continuing will to contribute towards achieving a Central African subregion free from weapons, in particular, small arms.

In Central Africa, as elsewhere, there are new dangers in addition to the long-standing threats. Indeed, the situation in the subregion and beyond has recently been marked by the lack of security as a result of piracy and armed robbery at sea in the Gulf of Guinea. That phenomenon, which has seen a worrying resurgence in the past year, clearly presents security and economic challenges both locally and generally. In addition to the fact that it is a major sea route for the transit of commodities, the Gulf of Guinea, rich in oil, mineral and biological resources, is of strategic importance to the countries of the region and the entire international community.

Aware of the stakes, the Heads of State and Government of Central and West Africa, with the support of Security Council resolution 2039 (2012) of 29 February 2012, held a summit on maritime safety and security in the Gulf of Guinea in Yaoundé on 24 and 25 June. The Heads of State and Government of ECCAS, the Economic Community of West African States and the Commission of the Gulf of Guinea adopted a declaration on maritime safety and security — the Yaoundé Declaration — and the Code of Conduct concerning the Prevention and Repression of Piracy, Armed Robbery against Ships, and Illegal Maritime Activities in West and Central Africa. An interregional cooperation centre tasked with ensuring the implementation of the regional strategy for maritime safety and security, based in Yaoundé, was established.

We welcome the fact that, through its presidential statement S/PRST/2013/13 of 14 August, the Security Council supported the outcomes of the Yaoundé summit, which are fully in line with the purposes and mandate of the United Nations Standing Advisory Committee on Security Questions in Central Africa. The Committee deserves Members' renewed support through the draft resolution that the First Committee adopts every year, which was introduced by the representative of Rwanda at this morning's meeting (see A/C.1/68/PV.20).

Mr. Grima (Malta): In the interests of time, I shall deliver a shortened version of our statement. The full text will be available on the QuickFirst website.

Allow me to extend my warmest congratulations to you, Mr. Chair, on your election to preside over this important Committee and to commend you for the professional manner in which you are conducting our proceedings.

As a small island State in the middle of the Mediterranean and a State member of the European Union, Malta continues to support the promotion of a closer regional dialogue as the key to regional development, integration and security, as manifested by its continued support of regional organizations and initiatives, such as the Union for the Mediterranean and the Western Mediterranean Forum (5+5 Dialogue).

Regional developments over the past months have further underscored the relevance of the Union as a significant channel of communication among its 43 members. While recognizing the necessity of continuing political dialogue in the Euro-Mediterranean region, the realization of concrete projects for the benefit

of our citizens remains a priority. In that context, Malta supports the secretariat in Barcelona through its special envoy to the Union's Secretary General.

Malta recognized at an early stage the relevance of action-oriented and cooperative dialogue among the countries of the Mediterranean to greater security in the region for the promotion of the economic and social development of the region's societies. In that regard, Malta welcomes the project diplomacy promoted by the Union for the Mediterranean in areas such as renewable sources of energy, transport, higher education, gender equality and water governance.

The 5+5 Dialogue, as a subregional initiative, continues to play a primary role in its contribution to regional cohesion and cooperation and as a complementary forum to wider organizations with the potential to bring to fruition concrete projects in various areas contributing to the realization of the vision for a Mediterranean region of peace and prosperity for its citizens.

The 5+5 Malta Summit, held in October 2012, reaffirmed the Dialogue's relevance to the Mediterranean dimension as a practical instrument to develop synergies with regional cooperation frameworks and fund structures. As a follow-up to the Summit, the 10 Ministers for Foreign Affairs met in Mauritania on 16 April for their 10th meeting. Other 5+5 meetings in 2013 focused on home affairs, higher education and research and defence matters.

Malta welcomes the fact that the declaration adopted at the tenth Meeting of the 5+5 Foreign Ministers reflects the Malta Declaration and follows up on its recommendations. The 5+5 Ministers agreed to engage more actively on regional security issues by boosting regional cooperation and by addressing future challenges through a stronger neighbourhood, training activities for the defence and security forces, technology transfer, intelligence cooperation and development aid. The 5+5 sectoral interior affairs and defence initiatives are both very active and relevant to the current Mediterranean situation. The fifteenth 5+5 meeting of the Interior Ministers was held in Algiers in April.

The tragic events related to the smuggling of human beings across the Mediterranean have resulted in the loss of hundreds of lives during this month alone. Malta calls on the international community to adopt new strategies and actions to thwart human

trafficking, which is an act that takes advantage of the most vulnerable in any society, often with deadly consequences. Malta considers transit countries as part of the solution in addressing the problem and recommends the full engagement of such countries at every level so as to provide them with the tools and motivation to take up their respective obligations with regard to that regional and international challenge. If States address the problem quickly and effectively, it will help save lives, improve security in the region by restricting the unregulated movement of persons, and reinforce regional cooperation in the Mediterranean on the many existing mechanisms and treaties that bind the littoral States.

Malta is a party to the major non-proliferation instruments, and it implements all effective and necessary control measures aimed at preventing the illicit trafficking in nuclear, chemical and biological weapons and their means of delivery and related materials, including the adoption of legislative measures and the enforcement of appropriate sanctions for the violation of such measures. Malta supports the establishment of nuclear-weapon-free zones and the implementation of confidence-building measures worldwide and in particular in the Mediterranean.

Mr. Shishechiha (Islamic Republic of Iran): My delegation associates itself with the statement delivered earlier by the representative of Indonesia on behalf of the Non-Aligned Movement.

The establishment of nuclear-weapon-free zones in the Middle East continues to remain a strategic approach of my country for promoting peace, security and stability in that volatile region. Despite all international efforts, unfortunately, no progress has been made so far towards the establishment of a zone. It is crystal clear that the aggressive and expansionist policies of the Israeli regime, its large arsenal of nuclear and other sophisticated weapons, and its non-adherence to international law, norms and principles are the only obstacles to the establishment of such a zone.

Peace and stability cannot be achieved in the Middle East so long as an irresponsible regime has a massive nuclear arsenal, continues to threaten the region and beyond, is not party to treaties banning weapons of mass destruction, in particular the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT), continues its underground nuclear weapon programme, and defies the repeated calls of the international community to comply with international norms and

principles. Against that background, to establish a nuclear-weapon-free zone in the Middle East, the international community has no choice but to exert the utmost pressure on Israel to accede to the NPT as a first step.

Dozens of General Assembly resolutions and the final documents of successive NPT Review Conferences have reaffirmed the importance of Israeli accession to the NPT and placement of its nuclear facilities under comprehensive International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) safeguards. The full and prompt implementation of the 1995 resolution and the 2010 NPT decision to hold a conference on the establishment of a nuclear-weapon-free zone in the Middle East are clear commitments undertaken, in particular by the sponsors of the resolution. Neglect of that commitment can only embolden Israel to continue to remain a source of threat and instability by flouting the aspirations of the international community.

The failure to convene the 2012 conference on the establishment of a nuclear-weapon-free zone in the Middle East, due only to Israeli objection, was the product of long-standing inaction in regard to those commitments. That unwelcome development seriously challenged the integrity and credibility of the non-proliferation regime and the consensus agreements of successive NPT Review Conferences.

At the same time, an expression of deep concern over the issue and the strong calls for the early convening of the conference voiced by the overwhelming majority of political groups, States and civil society at the second Preparatory Committee for the Review Conference of the Parties to the NPT, the General Conference of the IAEA, the High-level Meeting of the General Assembly on nuclear disarmament, the General Assembly's general debate, the Conferences on Facilitating the Entry into Force of the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty, and here at the First Committee have made it crystal-clear that the establishment of such a zone, proposed by Iran in 1974, enjoys continued strong international support. In order to avoid the further negative consequences of delay in the implementation of the 1995 resolution and the 2010 NPT action plan on the Middle East, the co-conveners of the conference must exert the utmost pressure on the Israeli regime to compel it to participate in the conference without precondition.

Iran was among the first countries to announce its readiness to participate in the conference. Iran

continues that policy; however, what we expect from such a conference is not merely a gathering of the countries of the region. An agreed plan of action and a timetable for establishing the universality of the NPT in the Middle East should be the highest priority of the conference. In the end, the Islamic Republic of Iran has spared no effort in supporting meaningful steps aimed at making progress towards the establishment of such a zone. The Islamic Republic of Iran will continue its strong support for the establishment of a nuclear-weapon-free zone in the Middle East by taking the necessary practical measures to that end.

Mr. Raafenberg (Suriname): I have the honour to speak on behalf of the States members of the Union of South American Nations (UNASUR).

All UNASUR States are parties to the main disarmament instruments adopted by the international community, including the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons, the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty, the Chemical Weapons Convention and the Biological Weapons Convention. Therefore, we constitute a zone free of all weapons of mass destruction.

In August 2009, at a special meeting held in San Carlos de Bariloche, Argentina, the Heads of State and Government of UNASUR decided to strengthen South America as a zone of peace by committing to the establishment of a mechanism of mutual confidence in the field of security and defence and upholding their decision to refrain from the threat or the use of force against the territorial integrity of any other State of UNASUR. The Heads emphasized their determination at the seventh meeting, convened on 30 August 2013 in Paramaribo. Following the decision of Bariloche, the Ministers for Foreign Affairs and Defence of UNASUR established a mechanism of confidence-building and security measures, including complete measures of implementation and assurances.

Since its creation in December 2008, the South American Defence Council has adopted its statute and biennial plans of action that underline actions on defence policies, military cooperation, humanitarian actions and peace cooperation, defence industry and technology, and education and training. A decision was also taken to establish the Centre for Strategic Studies on Defence as an institution for generating knowledge and disseminating South American strategic thinking on defence and security matters.

UNASUR highlights the fact that the United Nations Regional Centre for Peace, Disarmament and Development in Latin America and the Caribbean has succeeded in implementing programmes of work that are characterized by an interdisciplinary approach and coordination among various actors in the region, including other United Nations parties, national Governments, provincial and municipal authorities and civil society representatives.

Finally, UNASUR States thank Governments within and outside the region for the financial support they have offered to develop the Regional Centre's activities. In that regard, we encourage the international community to continue providing support to the centre's activities.

The Chair (*spoke in Arabic*): We have heard the last speaker inscribed on the list.

I now give the floor to representatives who have asked to speak in their exercise of the right of reply.

Mr. Huseynli (Azerbaijan): I am obliged to take the floor to deny the totally baseless accusations made by the Armenian representative against my country and to respond to his speculations on issues that are part of the negotiations process.

I am sure that everyone in the room was perplexed to hear the condemnation of the use of force from a country that has used force to occupy Azerbaijani territories and the destructive behaviour of which is the main reason for the current impasse in the negotiations process.

Armenia has flagrantly violated its international legal obligations by using military force to occupy the territory of Azerbaijan, carry out ethnic cleansing there and establish an ethnically based subordinate separatist entity on the occupied territory. The Security Council, in its relevant resolutions, has condemned the occupation of the territories of Azerbaijan, reaffirmed its sovereign territorial integrity and the inviolability of borders, and demanded the immediate, full and unconditional withdrawal of the occupying forces from all the occupied territories of Azerbaijan. The General Assembly and other intergovernmental organizations have adopted a similar position.

Secondly, the Armenian representative expressed concern about the increase in Azerbaijan's military budget. In order to stop the Devil from rebuking the sin, suffice it to say that a comparative analysis of

the population of the territory, the annual budget and gross domestic product of Armenia vis-à-vis its annual military expenditures, military personnel, the quantity of procured armaments, and foreign military assistance received shows that Armenia is the most militarized country in the South Caucasus. Armenia regularly conducts large-scale military exercises in the occupied territories of Azerbaijan that are attended by the President, the Minister of Defence and other high-level officials of Armenia.

Thirdly, with respect to the repeated calls for confidence-building measures, I wish to say that Armenia must first demonstrate in deeds a constructive attitude towards the negotiated settlement of the conflict and respect for international law by withdrawing its armed forces from Azerbaijan's territories, thereby paving the way for the effective implementation of full-fledged and meaningful confidence-building measures in our region.

Mr. Samvelian (Armenia): No matter the agenda item under discussion, the Azerbaijani delegation keeps repeating the same old stuff. It always comes back to the same issue, hammering at it like a well-trained spokesperson. A number of issues were touched upon in the statement of the Azerbaijani representative in his usual propagandistic manner. It is no news to us that Azerbaijan is distorting and misconstruing history, as well as all figures and facts relating to the Nagorno Karabakh issue.

As far as the allegations regarding the Armenian armed forces are concerned, I can only invite the Azerbaijani representatives and members of the Committee to look at the appropriate reports and documents of the United Nations and the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe on arms control, which contain ample information offering a detailed picture of Armenian armed forces.

Nevertheless, earlier today the Azerbaijani representative touched upon the issue of confidence-building measures, which I very much appreciate. If one truly and sincerely wants confidence-building measures, there are many perfect opportunities to obtain them. It is what we may call enlightened self-interest when two opponents tackle the same problem in a way that will benefit both. Unfortunately, over the years we have parted company with Azerbaijan's representatives in that we always say that confidence-building measures must be much more useful, concrete, incremental and modest in order

to attain a settlement. Our colleagues believe instead that there can be no confidence before peace. That is a difference in conventions, approach and strategy. We think that there can be no better test of this than starting right now.

The Chair (*spoke in Arabic*): The Committee has thus concluded the second stage of its work in the thematic discussions on the seven clusters of our work concerning nuclear weapons, disarmament machinery, other weapons of mass destruction, outer space, conventional weapons, other disarmament measures and measures for international security, and regional disarmament and security.

We have concluded our work today early, thanks to the cooperation and understanding of all delegations. I congratulate them all and thank them very sincerely for this. I hope that all delegations will benefit from this early adjournment by seizing this opportunity to hold consultations on the draft resolutions and decisions before the Committee and to communicate with their capitals, as necessary, so that the adopted texts will reflect the broadest possible consensus. I hope that representatives will make good use of this time and enjoy it.

The meeting rose at 4.45 p.m.