

Mr. Chairman,

Please allow me to subscribe to congratulations on your election to the high office of the Chairman of the First Committee and express confidence that, under your able stewardship, substantive progress will be made in addressing important issues on the agenda of this Committee.

I would also like to express my appreciation to Under-Secretary-General Nobuyasu Abe for his introductory remarks made at the opening meeting here.

Mr. Chairman,

Proliferation of weapons of mass destruction remains one of the most serious challenges to global security. In more than thirty years of existence of the Non-Proliferation Treaty, compliance with the nuclear disarmament obligation has turned into one of the thorniest problems, aggravated by an emerging trend to reconsider the role of the nuclear weapons as a deterrent. Many speakers here have already expressed their serious concern that the Non-Proliferation Treaty has been slowly eroded as a result of a weakened international commitment.

My delegation fully shares these concerns and calls for a strengthened and universal application of the existing regimes of non-proliferation of weapons of mass destruction and believes that the current international agreements in this area should be adapted to new realities.

The United Nations and its institutions should play a vital role in solving the problem of the proliferation of nuclear weapons. There is actually only one way to go: to tighten the control and to strengthen the non-proliferation regime and improve transparency when it comes to weapon development and testing.

As the site of the former Semipalatinsk nuclear testing ground, my country has a firsthand knowledge of horrendous effects of nuclear testing. Therefore, Kazakhstan calls for an early entry into force of the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty (CTBT). Moratorium on test explosions is a basis for nuclear non-proliferation, arms control and disarmament. The CTBT's entry into force will transform this political action into a legally binding commitment and legitimize a host of measures by the international community in support of such a ban.

We are convinced that the establishment of new internationally recognized nuclear-weapon-free zones throughout the world is compatible with the goal to ensure the integrity and sustainability of the international non-proliferation regime and contributes to the strengthening of peace and security in different regions and, hence, in the entire world. As a state which voluntarily renounced its nuclear heritage, the fourth largest nuclear arsenal in the world, Kazakhstan is actively involved in negotiations to establish a nuclear-weapon-free zone in Central Asia.

Kazakhstan strongly supports the IAEA's efforts to ensure global nuclear safety. Reinforcement of effective mechanisms, developed by the IAEA to strengthen the international safeguards system, will further contribute to the practical solution of the problems facing the international community in this area.

As a state party to the Chemical Weapons Convention, Kazakhstan is strongly committed to its obligations under the Convention. We also welcome the efforts by the state parties to the Biological Weapons Convention to develop agreed mechanisms of its strengthening.

Kazakhstan is seriously concerned by the fact that the Conference on Disarmament continues to be deadlocked and that it has failed to agree on its programme of work. As a symbol of multilateral efforts, the Conference on Disarmament must be allowed to play its mandated role and resume its substantive work.

Mr. Chairman,

Further and more results-oriented efforts to prevent illegal production of and trafficking in small arms are no less important.

The international community should adopt coordinated measures to prevent and reduce the excessive accumulation and uncontrolled spread of small arms, which undermine effort to ensure indivisible and comprehensive security.

The Programme of Action to Prevent, Combat and Eradicate the Illicit Trade in Small Arms and Light Weapons in All Its Aspects, adopted by the 2001 United Nations conference on this issue, represents an unprecedented high-level effort to achieve an international consensus on how to address this problem. It is crucially important to develop and implement agreed international measures to prevent and combat illicit trafficking in and manufacturing of small arms and light weapons and to reduce their excessive and destabilizing accumulations throughout the world. We believe that the United Nations should play a leading role in this process.

Kazakhstan supports the provisions of the OSCE Document on Small Arms and Light Weapons. We express confidence that this document will make a considerable contribution to global efforts to implement the above-mentioned Programme of Action.

Kazakhstan supports the United Nations Register of Conventional Arms by providing information on a regular basis since 1992 and considers the Register as the most important component of the export control system. This year, Kazakhstan provided to the Register information and data on military expenditures for the fiscal year 2002. We welcome the broadest possible participation of the United Nations Member States in this important international instrument, which should contribute to the efforts to ensure international peace and security.

We are also in favour of another transparency measure taken by the United Nations – the Standardized Instrument for Reporting Military Expenditures – and cosponsor a draft resolution on this issue in the First Committee.

Mr. Chairman,

Export control over nuclear material, equipment, dual-use technologies and weapons is an important element of the nuclear non-proliferation policy because of a danger of a possible access by non-state actors to materials used to produce weapons of mass destruction.

Therefore, Kazakhstan considers it important to strengthen its national export control system. We also believe that expanded cooperation between states to improve export control systems is a very effective way to counter international terrorism. Such cooperation can be especially meaningful at the regional level. Taking this into account, Kazakhstan hosted last June the Seventh Non-Proliferation and Export Control Forum of the countries of Central Asia and the Caucasus attended also by the representatives of other countries as well as international organizations. The participants in the Forum developed mechanisms of interaction between customs, border guard and other services in order to prevent diversion of dual-use technologies, materials and know-how, which could be used to produce weapons of mass destruction and their delivery systems.

Mr. Chairman,

In our view, effective coordination between the United Nations and regional arrangements is an important element of a renewed model of international security and stability. Supporting the United Nations efforts to strengthen the role of regional arrangements in the area of security, Kazakhstan is making tangible contribution to the efforts to strengthen regional stability and security in Asia. The implementation of President Nazarbaev's initiative to convene a Conference on Interaction and Confidence-Building in Asia is well on track. Further support of this process by the United Nations and its cooperation in this matter will go a long way to create a climate of trust and good-neighborliness in Asia.

The Shanghai Cooperation Organization also has a great potential in terms of contributing to regional and global stability and security.

Kazakhstan has proposed to establish in Almaty a Central Asian preventive diplomacy and conflict management center under the UN auspices and is calling for its support. Such an institution will strengthen the United Nations activities in the region, which should be in the interests of all countries concerned.

Mr. Chairman,

Finally, I would like once again to assure you that we will fully support all efforts by this Committee to adopt decisions which will strengthen the non-proliferation regime and promote security at regional and global levels.

My delegation stands ready, as it invariably did at previous sessions, to work together with our colleagues to achieve our common goals.

Thank you for your attention.