FIRST COMMITTEE
GENERAL DEBATE

STATEMENT

BY

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OF THE REPUBLIC OF BELARUS TO THE UNITED NATIONS

OCTOBER 10, 2002
NEW YORK
Mr. Chairman,

On behalf of the delegation of the Republic of Belarus, let me congratulate you upon your election to the Chairmanship of the First Committee. In your activities, you can rely upon our support and cooperation.

Mr. Chairman,

Last year's tragic events clearly demonstrated new challenges and threats of the XXIst century and a link existing between the problems of international security, disarmament and terrorism. The implementation by states of their obligations in the field of international security, non-proliferation and disarmament, above all, under the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons, the Biological Weapons Convention and the Chemical Weapons Convention, is becoming a key factor. It is necessary to ensure strict control over the existing stockpiles of weapons of mass destruction and their components as well as conventional weapons.

Mr. Chairman,

The Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT) is a key instrument, providing the international community with a consistent program of actions in the field of nuclear disarmament and nonproliferation. Belarus welcomes the outcome of the first session of the Preparatory Committee for the 2005 NPT Review Conference. Belarus also welcomes Cuba's decision to join both the NPT and the Treaty of Tlatelolco.

The Republic of Belarus attaches special significance to the earliest entry into force of the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty and to ensuring its universality and calls upon all states that have not yet joined the Treaty to do this as soon as possible.

The Republic of Belarus welcomes the signing of the Moscow Treaty and the decision by the Russian Federation and the United States to continue reductions of their nuclear arsenals.

Another most important issue is the prohibition of the production of fissile materials for weapons purposes. The Conference on Disarmament should at the earliest start deliberations on this problem.

Belarus believes that nuclear disarmament should be complemented by practical steps aimed at strengthening nuclear nonproliferation regime including by consolidating existing and setting up new nuclear-weapon-free zones.

Being convinced of the necessity to adopt effective measures in order to prevent the emergence of new types of weapons of mass destruction and new systems of such weapons, the Republic of Belarus has submitted at the current session the draft resolution "Prohibition of the development and manufacture of new types of weapons of mass destruction and new systems of such weapons". The Belarusian delegation hopes that this draft resolution will again be supported by all delegations and will be adopted without voting.

Mr. Chairman,

The Republic of Belarus has been pursuing responsible and consistent policies aimed at fulfilling its international obligations, including under the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons, the Treaty on the Reduction and Limitation of Strategic Offensive Arms, the Conventional Forces in Europe Treaty, the Intermediate and Shorter-Range Nuclear Forces Treaty, the Biological Weapons Convention and the Chemical Weapons Convention. Deposing the instruments of ratification of the Open Skies Treaty by the Republic of Belarus in 2001 reaffirmed the consistency of our policies.

Belarus supports wider transparency measures in armaments and military expenditure and regularly submits data for the UN Register of Conventional Arms.
Belarus attaches special significance to the elaboration of bilateral confidence-building measures, considers this direction as a priority in its foreign policies and has been conducting dialogue with its neighbors on these and other specific problems of regional security.

Mr. Chairman,

Our country welcomes the July 2001 United Nations Conference on the Illicit Trade in Small Arms and Light Weapons in All Its Aspects and the adoption by the Conference of its final document, the Program of Action to Prevent, Combat and Eradicate the Illicit Trade in Small Arms and Light Weapons in All Its Aspects.

The Republic of Belarus takes the necessary steps to prevent and eradicate the illicit trade in small arms and light weapons. On July 15, 2002 President of the Republic of Belarus Alexander Lukashenko signed the decree “On Fulfilling by the Republic of Belarus of International Obligations Following the OSCE Document on Small Arms and Light Weapons”. The Republic of Belarus also submitted to the UN Department for Disarmament Affairs detailed information in accordance with resolution 56/24 V entitled “The Illicit Trade in Small Arms and Light Weapons in All Its Aspects”.

Mr. Chairman,

The Republic of Belarus supports the prohibition of the use, stockpiling, production and transfer of anti-personnel landmines. Our country does not produce anti-personnel landmines. In 1995 the Republic of Belarus joined the de-facto international moratorium on the export of anti-personnel landmines. Lacking the necessary financial and technological resources, the Republic of Belarus at present is not ready to join the 1997 Convention on the Prohibition of the Use, Stockpiling, Production and Transfer of Anti-Personnel Mines and on Their Destruction but has been considering a possibility of joining the above Convention in future in the context of receiving international financial and technological assistance for de-mining and APL stockpile elimination activities.

The Republic of Belarus is ready to start cooperation on de-mining and APL stockpile elimination activities with all interested parties and welcomes any related proposals and initiatives.

In conclusion, I would like to express our hope that the international community will be able to develop reliable mechanisms to confront new types of risks and threats to our common security.

I thank you, Mr. Chairman.