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Check against delivery

STATEMENT

by

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in the thematic discussion of the First Committee

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Mr. Chairman,

As my delegation is taking the floor for the first time, allow me to congratulate you on your election to preside over the work of the First Committee during this session of the General Assembly.

Mr. Chairman,

It is a privilege for me to address this important forum of experts and disarmament luminaries having been long involved in the question of the weapons of mass destruction and missile proliferation. This is the proper forum and the perfect opportunity to share with this distinguish audience a few observation about Poland’s position on these issues.

First, let me note the change that has occurred over the last few months with regard to the international security environment. The events of September 11th demonstrate the kind of change that has taken place. There is a new general awareness of threats. That fact alone highlights all threats, which societies and the international community as a whole will have to deal with in the years ahead. This is not to suggest that terrorism is likely to be the only kind of challenge or threat to our security – whatever part of the world we come from.

We are already at a time where threats are identified in many documents, whether those adopted by the United Nations or by regional security structures – or otherwise reflected in various national security doctrines. All these threats have no boundaries anymore. They may be threats stemming from local crises and conflicts, local terrorism. They may be inherent in the proliferation of weapons of mass destruction and their means of delivery. They may be rooted in the information age. No matter what, they now transcend all boundaries. Today each geographical region or state faces threats, which are familiar and common.

Mr. Chairman,

The Polish Government has placed the highest importance on non-proliferation, arms limitation, disarmament and export control. The Government of Poland sees them as tools to be used as weapons while combating proliferation of weapons of mass destruction where missiles and related technologies play the key role.

In some ways the world is becoming a more dangerous place as some countries and non-state actors look for technologies and weapons that can threaten our existence. Now, more that ever before the international community needs to implement effective ways and means of regulating exports of potentially dangerous technologies, of goods and dual-use items – while at the same time
addressing the national imperative of economic growth and social development. Today the threat caused by the proliferation of WMD and missiles is more diverse and unpredictable than it has ever been. This must be a serious concern to all of us. The is a problem we all must tackle together.

In this connection I would like to refer to the recent International Conference on WMD, Terrorism and Export Control held in Warsaw under the patronage of the President of the Republic of Poland. One of the Conference’s many important conclusions was that the international community must continue searching for new mechanisms adequate to dealing with the problem as a whole. At the same time it is important to use the tools we already have, and to ensure that they are being used effectively in a mutually reinforcing way. These tools must be kept keen, they must be in good repair so the international community can continue developing and deploying them effectively. Principal among these tools are diplomacy, deterrence, denial and disruption.

Mr. Chairman,

It goes without saying that the international community must make a constructive contribution these days in the field of non-proliferation, export control, disarmament and arms limitation. These steps are aimed at preventing the proliferation of weapons of mass destruction and means of their delivery on one side, and on the other at developing effective and non-discriminatory international verification and control mechanisms.

The tragic events of September 11th show us the desperate need to attain a higher standard of security. Therefore, we must make joint efforts to consolidate international security, in particular on regional scale. We cannot afford not to work together. The international community now has a rare opportunity to radically downgrade the role of missiles in military doctrines.

Mr. Chairman,

Efforts to stabilize the international situation can in no way be limited to the defense area alone. Of critical importance is a constructive application of diplomacy and available legal means to promote democracy, human rights, freedoms and a civil society. At the same time we cannot close our eyes to the immediate threats that derive from the existing weapons of mass destruction, the development of new types of weapons, and the steady erosion of arms control and disarmament agreements. Nor can we overlook the lack of control of access to such weapons by non state, and therefore uncontrollable actors.
As stated in the report on the issue of missiles in all its aspects, prepared by the Panel of Governmental Experts for the Secretary General, the current situation in the field of missiles is a serious threat for international peace and security. The report notes that there are multiple approaches currently undertaken at the national, bilateral, regional, and multilateral levels, which deal with the issue of missiles both within and outside the United Nations.

As the destabilizing effects of missiles and related technology are ever more evident, the international community is becoming increasingly worried over the existing gaps in international norms against proliferation of missiles. So far, we could only see initiatives that applied to three areas: limitation and elimination of military missile inventory, missile launch transparency and the prevention of proliferation of nuclear-armed missiles. It seems that the only multilateral mechanism that explicitly addresses the issue of the threat of ballistic missile proliferation is a universally acceptable draft of an International Code of Conduct against Ballistic Missile Proliferation (ICOC). Initially developed by the members of the Missile Technology Control Regime, it is now open to all states to be adopted in the near future during the International Conference, which will be held in November in the Hague.

Mr. Chairman,

The Code, as proposed, is to be a politically binding agreement to promote the prevention and curbing of the proliferation of ballistic missiles systems and to develop norms of missile behavior. Furthermore this agreement would promote confidence regarding missile and space launch vehicle activities. The agreement is intended to establish global principles, and commitments to transparency and other confidence building measures that address the proliferation of ballistic missiles capable of delivering weapons of mass destruction. The Code should be seen as the first step toward building a widely subscribed multilateral document, which addresses the proliferation of ballistic missiles. It would appeal to states to cooperate on a voluntary basis in curbing ballistic missile proliferation. In order for the Code to succeed it must be subscribed to by a large number of countries from all regions.

Mr. Chairman,

Thus far as the fear of proliferation grows, based on political, economic and technological developments, both from countries that supply it and those that demand it, the Missile Technology Control Regime is the only multilateral mechanism that explicitly addresses the issue. What it amounts to is a set of policy guidelines accepted so far by 33 states which have agreed to coordinate their
export control policies based on common guidelines and on a shared list of controlled items which each partner implements through its own national legislation.

It is clear that an arrangement like MTCR is becoming increasingly important when the threat of missiles is taking new and ominous forms. A number of states have crossed the missile threshold while others appear to have similar ambitions; some states - capable of using missiles – are said to be trying to develop warheads with weapons of mass destruction. The international community is ever more anxious about effective measures to check this dangerous trend. In order to deal self-evident concerns the MTCR should be joined by all missile-producing states. The universalization of MTCR guidelines and procedures is, and will be, the way to successfully impede and constrain the proliferation of missiles and technologies.

Mr. Chairman,

In this connection I should like to refer to the results of the 17th MTCR Plenary Meeting held in Warsaw between 21st and 27th of September. This important event marked the start of the Poland’s chairmanship of the Regime for 2002 and 2003.

The 33 members mandated the Polish Chair to pursue a range of contacts with non-partners, through MTCR-sponsored workshops, seminars and information sessions concerning the MTCR’s goals with focus on such topics as export control policies, procedures, related legislation, control lists, transshipment, transit and enforcement. Referring to the world-wide fight against terrorism, the MTCR partners agreed to issue a statement on Joint Action, in which they stated, that the MTCR would continue contributing to the fight against terrorism by limiting the risk of controlled items and technologies falling into the hands of risky groups and individuals. The Joint Action statement also called upon all states to take similar action. But no one should be expected to do this in isolation. We should work in partnership to tackle threats and risks that we all share.

In conclusion, I would like to stress that the MTCR, chaired by Poland, will make every possible effort to curb the proliferation of delivery vehicles for weapons of mass destruction to foster regional and international security.

Thank you for your attention.