FIFTY-EIGHT SESSION OF THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY

FIRST COMMITTEE

Draft resolution L. 26

"Promotion of Multilateralism in the area of Disarmament and Non-Proliferation"

Explanation of vote

By

H.E. Ambassador Carlo Trezza
on behalf of the European Union

November 5, 2003

Check against delivery
Mr. Chairman,

I have the honour to speak on behalf of the European Union on the draft resolution L.26 entitled "Promotion of Multilateralism in the area of Disarmament and Non-Proliferation". The Acceding Countries (Cyprus, Czech Republic, Estonia, Hungary, Latvia, Lithuania, Malta, Poland, Slovakia and Slovenia) align themselves with this explanation of vote.

Mr. Chairman,

Multilateralism in the area of disarmament and non-proliferation is a concept to which the EU is fully committed. As it is stated in the Declaration on Non Proliferation of Weapons of Mass Destruction adopted by the European Council held in Thessaloniki on 19 and 20 June 2003, the European approach is guided by the commitment to uphold the multilateral disarmament and non-proliferation treaties and agreements and to support multilateral institutions charged respectively with verification and upholding of compliance with these treaties.

Similar concepts are contained in the Basic Principles for an EU Strategy against Proliferation of Weapons of Mass Destruction as well as in the Action Plan to implement those principles.

Multilateralism is indeed one of the core principles in the area of disarmament and non-proliferation with a view to establishing, maintaining and strengthening universal norms and enlarging their scope. Multilateral co-operation is of particular importance in combating new threats of terrorism as well as persisting security threats, in particular the proliferation of weapons of mass destruction and their means of delivery. It plays a key role in the implementation of relevant international instruments of arms control, disarmament and non-proliferation.

Unfortunately, draft resolution L.26 contains a number of elements, both in the preambular and operative paragraphs, which the European Union cannot support.

As these elements in question are of a serious nature, we have brought to the attention of the sponsors our concerns and views on this subject and have provided suggestions as to how the draft could be improved. While we appreciate that some of our suggestions have been incorporated in the text, we regret that our fundamental
concerns have not been taken into account and that the draft resolution retains language that makes it unbalanced.

The European Union believes that unilateral, bilateral, and plurilateral actions in disarmament and non-proliferation can bring and have brought to positive results. Amongst other documents, the final document of the 2000 NPT review conference itself recognises this. Draft resolution L.26 does not give sufficient credit to such measures.

It is for these reasons that we are not in a position to support this resolution. We remain committed to multilateral approaches in the areas of arms control, disarmament and non-proliferation and continue to recognise their importance.

I thank you, Mr. Chairman.