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First Committee

Thematic Discussion on Disarmament Machinery

Statement by

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on behalf of the European Union

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Please check against delivery
1. The Candidate Countries Turkey, Croatia\(^1\) and the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia\(^1\) the Countries of the Stabilisation and Association Process and potential candidates Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Montenegro, Serbia, and the EFTA countries Iceland and Liechtenstein, members of the European Economic Area, as well as Ukraine, the Republic of Moldova, Armenia and Georgia align themselves with this declaration.

2. The European Union strongly believes that a multilateral approach to security, including disarmament and non-proliferation, provides the best way to maintain international order. The EU, as a staunch supporter of multilateralism, sees as mutually reinforcing the General Assembly and its First Committee, the Conference on Disarmament (CD), the UN Disarmament Commission (UNDC), and the various international treaties with their bodies and review processes.

3. In light of the new threats to security, the disarmament machinery is gaining an ever more important role and we should all make every effort to preserve and, where possible, to further strengthen this architecture.

4. This Committee, due to its universal character, forms one of the most important fora for discussion on non-proliferation and disarmament issues. The positive outcomes of the recent sessions of this Committee should not distract us from the need to further increase its effectiveness in addressing contemporary challenges to peace and security.

5. At this juncture, we would like to underline the wide support of the international community for the establishment of an Office for Disarmament Affairs, with the task of fully implementing the relevant mandates, decisions and resolutions of the General Assembly. We hope that the Secretary-General's reform initiatives lead to further revitalisation of UN action in the field of disarmament and non-proliferation. In this context the EU welcomes the recent appointment of Ambassador Sérgio de Queiroz Duarte as High Representative for Disarmament Affairs. Mr Duarte has long standing experience in Disarmament and Non-proliferation and we look forward to working with him to give new impetus to our work.

6. The EU recognises the importance of the Conference on Disarmament as the single multilateral forum available to the international community for disarmament negotiations. We have consistently been committed to agree on a programme of work capable of overcoming the current stalemate. We were encouraged by the constructive, structured and substantive discussions that have taken place during the first part of this year's session, and by the momentum created by these discussions. The momentum was developed as a direct result of the initiative taken jointly by the six Presidents of the CD last year. The P6 efforts have clearly been taken up and brought to an even higher level this year, leading to the appointment of coordinators for seven items of the CD Agenda and culminating in the presentation of a Presidential Draft Decision for programme of work (L.1), and two further documents (CRP.5 and CRP.6) issued in a serious, patient and strenuous process to add clarity and to provide answers to questions raised by a few delegations as regards document L.1. These three documents have fostered our hope that finally the stalemate in the CD could be overcome. We regret that no consensus on these documents could be established so far. We continue to urge those very few remaining States Members of the CD to go along with consensus on the basis of the documents on the table (i.e. L.1, CRP.5 and CRP.6) in order for the CD to resume its negotiating role in early 2008.

7. The UNDC is also an important part of the disarmament machinery. Our objective remains that the UNDC agrees on “Recommendations for achieving the objectives of nuclear disarmament and non-proliferation of nuclear weapons” and “Practical Confidence Building Measures in the Field of Conventional Arms”.

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\(^1\) Croatia and the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia continue to be part of the Stabilisation and Association Process.
8. Notwithstanding the difficult issues and general political background in the areas of disarmament and non-proliferation, which have not been conducive to reaching a concrete outcome of the groups’ work, the EU’s faith in a positive result at the end of the UNDC’s three-year cycle remains unchanged. In fact, the UNDC had difficult, but substantive, debates which have brought us a step closer to a successful session next year.

9. Following the adoption of UNGA Resolution 61/60, the EU has constructively supported the creation of the Open-ended Working Group to consider the objectives and the agenda, including the possible establishment of the preparatory committee, for the fourth special session of the General Assembly devoted to disarmament. Notwithstanding this year’s obstacles, the EU, being a staunch supporter of effective multilateralism in the process of disarmament, arms control, non-proliferation and related international security matters, hopes that the working group’s recommendations may serve as a good basis for further work on this issue.

10. The existing machinery has produced important obligations and commitments in the disarmament field. However, some problems relating to its functioning remain unsolved. The dynamics of today’s international relations put increased responsibility on our shoulders to adapt and update the existing acquis. What is essential for any machinery of this kind to function properly is political will to use it in good faith and full compliance with the obligations and commitments produced.

The EU will constructively continue to develop efforts in order to reach that aim.

Thank you.