General Assembly
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First Committee
Thematic Debate on Disarmament Machinery

Check against delivery

STATEMENT

By

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Mr. Chair,

Multilateral approaches to disarmament and non-proliferation are essential in developing, maintaining and further strengthening fundamental norms. In recent years we have witnessed that several key multilateral bodies have been struggling to live up to their expectations or even worse been fully paralysed. The main responsibility lies with us member states.

While the situation is serious, we also see some encouraging trends. Firstly my delegation welcomes the establishment of the Office for Disarmament Affairs, and the appointment of Ambassador Sérgio de Queiróz Duarte as High Representative for Disarmament Affairs. Given his impressive experience, we are fully confident that he will perform his task more than well.

Last year we assured a successful outcome of the ETWC 6th Review Conference. The CWC has for 10 years delivered impressive results. The same can be said of the Mine Ban Convention. We are also witnessing a readiness to really address the humanitarian impact caused by cluster munitions. The NPT 2010 Review Process had a good start this spring. Efforts to implement Security Council Resolution 1540 are gaining momentum.

Having said this, no one can deny that the situation in the Conference on Disarmament is unsustainable. We have been grappling with a programme of work for too many years. This spring there was hope that we finally could get the CD back to work. Yet again we did not reach consensus. If this situation prevails the credibility of the CD will be more than eroded.

Norway urges CD member states, especially those which have not yet joined consensus, to demonstrate flexibility and allow the CD to perform its task. It should be remembered that a programme of work will only allow for negotiations and consultations to start, nothing more.

We are in the middle of the three-year cycle of the UN Disarmament Commission (UNDC). My delegation appreciates the exchange of views at the last session. We hope that these deliberations will lead to - for the first time in many years - agreed UNDC recommendations. Otherwise, we would need in the long-run to take a serious look at the working methods of the UNDC.

Mr. Chair,

My delegation notes the call for holding a fourth special session of the UN General Assembly on disarmament (SSOD IV). Norway would be pleased if there had been a consensus on the modalities of such a conference and that we had a strong confidence
in a positive and forward-looking outcome. To this end Norway has provided financial support to enhanced consultations on SSOD IV. At this stage, the needed consensus has not emerged. My delegation believes that more consultations will be needed before a decision can be taken to summon SSOD IV.

Finally, Mr. Chair,

Norway has a particular interest in the functioning of the First Committee. Given its universal nature, we consider this body of the UN General Assembly as fundamental in advancing the cause of disarmament and non-proliferation. We have seen progress in the way the First Committee works, but more needs to be done.

We re-iterate our view that when a resolution has been adopted it will stand unless otherwise decided. To the extent possible my delegation hopes that we can get the number of repetitive resolutions down.

In every session we notice tremendous efforts are put into mobilising the highest number of co-sponsors as possible. We should ask ourselves whether this race for co-sponsorship is the best way to make use of the four weeks available. At least for small delegations it may be quite time consuming assessing the many invitations for co-sponsorship. Could we not consider the possibility of limiting the possibility of co-sponsorship to resolutions which are introduced for the first time in this committee?

To conclude Mr. Chair,

The overall picture for the disarmament machinery is mixed. We could do better, but the situation could have been worse.