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15th Meeting. Continuation of the thematic discussion on item
subjects and introduction and consideration of all draft
resolutions submitted under items 88 to 105

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STATEMENT

By

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First Secretary and Adviser on Disarmament

New York, 15 October 2007

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Mr. Chair,

Last month we celebrated the 10th anniversary of the Mine Ban Convention. This Convention has truly been innovative in forging partnerships across regional and political divisions, and not least in involving all stakeholders. The active role played by the civil society in the Mine Ban Convention has truly been instrumental for the success of the treaty.

The Mine Ban Convention has set a fundamental norm which goes beyond the membership of the Convention. Yet, we urge those that have not joined the Convention to do so without delay.

The Mine Ban Convention proves that multilateralism works and is truly an expression of the concept of disarmament as humanitarian action. Norway supports a UNIDIR project to further develop this concept.

Norway is convinced that important lessons can be learned and inspirations derived from the Mine Ban Convention in addressing the issue of cluster munitions.

The humanitarian suffering caused by the use of cluster munitions has been a well-known and well-documented problem for years. Despite several efforts made to address this issue in an effective way it had not been possible to agree on a negotiating process. Seeing the use of cluster munitions as an increasingly pressing humanitarian and developmental problem rather than simply an arms control or disarmament issue, the Norwegian government decided to initiate an international process with the objective of prohibiting cluster munitions causing unacceptable humanitarian and developmental harm.

The Oslo Declaration spells out our commitment to negotiate an international legal instrument that prohibits cluster munitions that cause unacceptable harm to civilians by the end of 2008. The process is a joint, open and inclusive undertaking by likeminded states, the UN, the ICRC and the Red Cross & Red Crescent Movement, the Cluster Munition Coalition, and other civil society organisations.

The UN has recently urged all Member States to address immediately the horrendous effects of cluster munitions by concluding a legally binding instrument, and called on States to until such a treaty is adopted take domestic measures to immediately freeze the use and transfer of all cluster munitions. This UN call deserves a clear and adequate response from Member States. This is about people, communities and countries affected by the use and the remnants of the use of cluster munitions.
Mr. Chair,

Combating and eradicating illicit trade in small arms and light weapons in all its aspects is fundamental to improving global, regional and national security as well as necessary social and economic development.

Norway is a strong supporter of international efforts to achieve this goal, and co-operates with governments as well as Non Governmental Organisations based on the UN Programme of Action (PoA) within multilateral, regional and bilateral frameworks.

Norway has provided considerable financial support to various studies, workshops, capacity building projects and the implementation of regional declarations and protocols. In addition Norway has financially supported the UN in assisting member states to prepare and submit their national reports under the PoA. Likewise Norway has for a number of years provided core funding for the Small Arms Survey.

Norway has been consistent in underlining that the PoA needed to be further strengthened. In 2005 we welcomed the new instrument on tracing and making, although we would have preferred to see it as legally binding.

Some years ago Norway and the Netherlands took the initiative to highlight the need for more effective international cooperation in addressing the question of brokering of small arms and light weapons. A conference on the subject was organized in Oslo 23-24 April 2003, which has formed the basis for several steps to promote international cooperation on illicit brokering.

Norway has advocated an international instrument against illicit brokering, and participated in the UN Inter-Governmental Group of Experts (GGE) which was convened in 2006 and has reported to this session of the UN General Assembly.

We greatly appreciated the constructive way the GGE was chaired, allowing for in-depth discussions of the challenges posed by illicit brokering. Although Norway had hoped for bolder recommendations, we welcome the fact that the GGE managed to produce a consensus report. It is important that this session of the UN General Assembly endorses this report and thus give an impetus for active follow-up of the recommendations contained in the GGE’s report in the coming biennial meetings under the PoA.

Mr. Chair,

At the 61st session of the UN General Assembly Norway enthusiastically supported the resolution calling for a process to start with the aim to reach an Arms Trade Treaty. Norway looks forward to the outcome of the Intergovernmental Expert Group which has been established to clarify the modalities for such a treaty.
While Norway is not member of this GGE, we have articulated our views to the UN Secretariat on how we envisage an ATT.

Firstly, we are convinced that an ATT is feasible.

Secondly, we recommend a broad scope capturing a list of equipments broadly to be based on the UN Register of Conventional Arms. We believe that certain dual-use items could also be relevant.

Thirdly, a number of commitments already exist in relation to arms transfer. An ATT must expand these parameters. From our perspective these could include:

- their relevance to terrorist activities
- their relevance to violent and/or organized crime
- their potential for destabilizing regions and/or countries
- their potential for provoking or increasing internal and regional conflict
- their potential for negatively affecting sustainable development
- involving corrupt practices
- their risk of being used for violations of international humanitarian or human rights laws
- transfers in breach of any international or regional commitment and/or obligation
- transfers being used for or to facilitate uses referred to above

A new instrument would need to be supported by for instance mechanisms for information exchange, reporting and documentation, monitoring, compliance, assistance and cooperation. The negotiations would need to clarify how these elements are to be organised.

Before concluding Mr. Chair,

Let me re-iterate that Norway fully supports the efforts to deal with the challenges posed by man-portable air defence systems. MANPADS continue to pose a substantial threat to civil aviation. We must take all necessary national and international steps to prevent unauthorised access to or use of MANPADS, whilst preserving the right to possess MANPADS for legitimate defence purposes.

Thank you.