STATEMENT

by

H.E. Ms. Sanja Štiglic
Ambassador
Permanent Representative of the Republic of Slovenia

in the Nuclear Weapon Cluster

of the General Assembly First Committee

New York, 15 October 2009
Mr. Chairman,

Since this is the first time the Slovenian delegation has the opportunity to take the floor at the 64th session of this committee, allow me first to congratulate you, Ambassador Cancela, and the members of the bureau for your election and a job well done so far. My delegation has full confidence in your judgment and is convinced that you will wisely guide this committee to fulfil its task.

I would also like to fully subscribe to the statement delivered by the distinguished Ambassador Hellgren of Sweden on behalf of the European Union.

Mr. Chairman,

Like other delegations, Slovenia also welcomes the renewed momentum in the field of nuclear non-proliferation and disarmament. The window of opportunity is here and now – and should not be missed. We are convinced that the impetus, inspired primarily by the statements of US President Obama and others, should bring us forward in achieving our goals in this field.

In order to effectively use the current window of opportunity, we believe the following concrete steps could help bringing forward our agenda in the field of nuclear non-proliferation and disarmament:

Firstly, we should make the effort and further consolidate the Non-proliferation Treaty (NPT). A generation before us successfully negotiated the NPT and made it a cornerstone of the international peace and security system. Since then, the NPT faced many challenges, namely further nuclear proliferation and non-compliance. In addition to that, we believe that more should be done to prevent any proliferation of nuclear weapons to terrorists. Absence of any meaningful outcome of the last Review Conference in the spring of 2005 contributed to the notion that the NPT is not what it used to be. Slovenia firmly believes this is not the case. We are convinced that the present momentum should enable the Review Conference in May 2010 to be more effective and that we will – with a positive outcome – manage to consolidate this important instrument and preserve it for the future. Consequently, our common goal is a universal acceptance and implementation of all objectives enshrined in the NPT.

Secondly, the Comprehensive Test Ban Treaty (CTBT), which our heads of states and ministers signed in this building 14 years ago, has still not entered into force. We are convinced this should happen as quickly as possible. We believe that early entry into force and full completion of its verification regime are now within our reach, in particular after the announcement of the US government to move forward with the CTBT ratification process. Other ratifications of Annex II states should be encouraged and proceed without delay. We should redouble our efforts to reach this goal and fully use this valuable instrument in order to achieve our common goal of a world free of tests of nuclear weapons.
The third step forward should be the start of negotiations for the Fissile Material Cut-off Treaty (FMCT) in the Conference of Disarmament when it resumes its work in Geneva in January. Slovenia warmly welcomes the decision of the CD of 29 May this year, which includes the decision to start these negotiations. As an observer state and a candidate to become a full CD member, Slovenia wishes to actively engage in these negotiations that should, in our view, commence without delay early next year. A verifiable FMCT, once successfully negotiated, would significantly contribute to nuclear non-proliferation and disarmament, and would also complement the NPT and the CTBT. We are convinced that the future FMCT should also contain an effective verification mechanism, where the IAEA could play an important role. In this context we welcome the draft resolution tabled and presented by the delegation of Canada. The Canadian proposal comes at a right time. It should steer our efforts in this regard. My delegation believes that this important resolution should be adopted without a vote, thus demonstrating our unequivocal commitment in this regard.

Slovenia believes that in such positive spirit the steps of NPT consolidation, CTBT entry into force, and the start of FMCT negotiations would make our world safer.

Mr. Chairman,

At the beginning of the 21st century, nuclear energy and other nuclear technologies are to play a very important role. The so called “renaissance of nuclear energy” and the application of nuclear technologies in health, food production, agriculture, offer great hope for the humanity and sustainable development, particularly for those who continue to be plagued by poverty, disease and underdevelopment. On the other hand, the irresponsible spread of nuclear technology represents a great concern. The proliferation of nuclear weapons, the issues of nuclear safety and security connected with the peaceful use of nuclear energy and technologies are the most frequently quoted risks. To meet the expectations of the “great hope” it is absolutely vital to preserve and further strengthen the global non-proliferation architecture. Commitments by all sides are needed if we wish to increase the responsible use of civil nuclear power and, at the same time, prevent the spread of sensitive nuclear technologies.

Mr. Chairman,

In conclusion, let me reiterate that Slovenia shares the vision and goal of a world free of nuclear weapons. We are convinced that this vision is realistic. We are well aware that we will have to walk many miles to achieve this goal, but by making progress with regard to the three mentioned steps we will certainly be on the right track.

Thank you, Mr. Chairman