STATEMENT

On behalf of the European Union

by

H.E. Mr Magnus Hellgren
Ambassador

in the Other Weapons of Mass Destruction Cluster
of the General Assembly First Committee

United Nations
New York

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- CHECK AGAINST DELIVERY -
1. I speak on behalf of the European Union. The Candidate Country the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia*, the Countries of the Stabilisation and Association Process and Potential Candidates Bosnia and Herzegovina, Montenegro, Serbia, and the EFTA country Iceland, member of the European Economic Area, as well as Ukraine and the Republic of Moldova align themselves with this statement.

2. The proliferation of weapons of mass destruction and their means of delivery continues to be a major threat to international peace and security that calls for a global approach. The risk that terrorists may acquire biological or chemical weapons adds a further critical dimension to this issue. It is vitally important to enhance international cooperation, in the framework of the United Nations as well as between all Member States, in order to address these challenges.

3. The main multilateral instruments relevant to this cluster debate are the Biological and Toxin Weapons Convention, the Chemical Weapons Convention and the 1925 Geneva Protocol. These legally binding prohibitions play a key role in reducing the threat from these weapons of mass destruction. Full compliance with all their provisions are of critical importance to international peace and security. The European Union calls for the full universalisation of these instruments. We also call on all Member States to consider withdrawing any reservation made upon acceding to the 1925 Protocol.

4. The European Union will continue to give assistance to those States which request cooperation in implementing these instruments. In this spirit, the EU has adopted a new Joint Action in support of the implementation and universalisation of the BTWC.

5. The European Union will continue to actively contribute to the current intersessional process agreed at the BTWC Review Conference in 2006. This year’s Meeting of Experts in August again proved the usefulness of regular exchanges on key themes relevant to the implementation of the convention.

6. The Implementation Support Unit for the BTWC plays a particularly important role in maintaining the link between States Parties to the BTWC. Three years after its establishment the EU wishes to express its continued appreciation for the work done by the ISU.

7. The European Union calls on all States Parties to the BTWC to submit their annual confidence building measures. The EU welcomes the fact that participation in this important mechanism, which serves to strengthen the Convention, has increased over the last few years. However, much remains to be done to ensure full participation by all States Parties in this politically binding mechanism. The question of an evaluation and a possible improvement of the confidence-building measures mechanism and its functioning should be given further consideration.

* The former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia continues to be part of the Stabilisation and Association Process
8. Looking forward to the 2011 BTWC Review Conference and beyond, the European Union recalls its commitment to the development of measures to verify compliance with the Convention.

Mr Chairman,

9. The Chemical Weapons Convention - the first internationally verified treaty banning an entire category of weapons of mass destruction under international verification – is a major multilateral achievement. Today, no more than seven United Nations Members have yet to become party to the CWC, including two signatories. The European Union continues to urge those seven States to join in our common endeavour of ridding the world of chemical weapons.

10. Time bound destruction of chemical weapons remains a key objective of the Convention, and the European Union is heartened by the fact that three declared possessor States have completed destruction of their stockpiles as provided for in the CWC. We warmly congratulate India for successfully concluding this task earlier this year. It is of utmost importance that the remaining possessor States continue to be mindful of their obligations, address their challenges effectively, and take all necessary measures to accelerate operations with a view to completing destruction on time.

11. Destruction of the weapons of the past must be accompanied by the prevention of new chemical weapons being created in the future. In particular the provisions on industry verification, national implementation and challenge inspections are vital for pursuing the non-proliferation goals of the Convention. The European Union recognizes that the implementation of all articles of the Convention can prevent toxic chemicals from falling into the hands of terrorists – this applies in particular to measures that lead to enhanced national implementation. The European Union calls on all concerned States to ensure that the necessary legislation and infrastructure are in place to implement the CWC in an effective manner.

12. One expression of the European Union’s commitment to the aims of the CWC is our joint financial support to the programmes and activities of the Organization for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons (OPCW). Through three consecutive Joint Actions, since 2005, the EU has provided more than five million euro to support OPCW projects that are in line with the European Union’s Strategy against Proliferation of Weapons of Mass Destruction. I am pleased to announce that, in July this year, the European Union adopted a Council Decision that will provide for further cooperation with and support to the OPCW in the years ahead.

13. It would be remiss of the European Union not to take this opportunity to congratulate Ambassador Rogelio Pfirter of Argentina for his successful tenure as Director General of the OPCW. We look forward to working closely with his successor – due to be appointed this fall – as we continue our work to reach universality and full implementation of the Chemical Weapons Convention.
Mr Chairman,

14. The European Union continues to fully support the actions taken under Security Council resolution 1540. This resolution is fundamental to the development of effective mechanisms to prevent and counter proliferation to non-State actors of weapons of mass destruction and their means of delivery. We urge all States to comply with and fully implement the legally binding obligations of this resolution, and resolutions 1673 and 1810. We fully support the 1540 Committee’s fulfilment of its renewed mandate and encourage all States to participate actively in the comprehensive review of the status of implementation of the resolution and contribute to its success.

15. International legal provisions are essential but not enough by themselves: they must be effectively implemented. Regular and concrete counter-proliferation actions are therefore required to ensure that each State complies with its non-proliferation obligations. If it is to be effective, our action against proliferation must thus be based on resolute operational cooperation to prevent and disrupt illicit transfers, to control exports even more effectively, to counter illegal networks of diversion and trafficking, and to combat proliferation financing. The EU welcomes the development of new innovative international tools against proliferation such as the Proliferation security initiative.

16. The EU continues to support other international mechanisms designed to prevent the proliferation of WMD, such as the Global Partnership against the spread of weapons of mass destruction, and supports the expansion the Global Partnership to address these threats globally.

17. The EU is very concerned by the risks caused by the proliferation of missiles that could be used to deliver weapons of mass destruction, including ballistic missiles of increasingly great range and sophisticated technologies. A number of tests of mid- and long-range missiles conducted over the last years outside all existing transparency and pre-notification schemes, especially by the DPRK and Iran, deepen our concern in this respect.

18. The European Union continues to consider that the Hague Code of Conduct represents, with the Missile Technology Control Regime, the best existing tools to deal with the problem of missile proliferation. The EU reaffirms the clear multilateral and universal purpose of the HCOC. We call on all States that have not already done so to adhere to it as soon as possible. We also call on all subscribing States to uphold the authority of the Code and fully implement all its provisions, including on pre-launch notifications. Continued disregard for key provisions of the Code undermines the viability and the functioning of the Code.

19. The positive statements made regarding the full implementation of HCOC at the G-8 Summit in L'Aquila, Italy earlier this year, are encouraging. Other such recent developments include the agreement between Presidents Obama and Medvedev in Moscow, at the conclusion of their early-July deliberations on nuclear relations, to
implement the important objective of enhanced data sharing on ballistic missile launches through the creation of a Joint Data Collection Centre located in Moscow.

20. We also reiterate our proposal for the start of consultations on a multilateral treaty banning short and intermediate range ground-to-ground missiles.

Thank you