UNGA 65: FIRST COMMITTEE

THEMATIC DEBATE: DISARMAMENT MACHINERY

Statement by Dell Higbie
Ambassador for Disarmament

18 October 2010

As delivered
Mr Chairman

There have been some significant norm-setting achievements in recent years with the adoption of a number of texts in the field of conventional weapons – and we've just embarked, this time under UN auspices, on another such exercise (the Arms Trade Treaty). These have led, and in the case of the ATT will lead, to significant improvements in the circumstances of everyday life for a large number of human beings.

But in other humanitarian law or disarmament contexts, we can point to little progress. The current inertia, particularly in the CD, is of significant concern and disappointment to New Zealand. Our frustration may not, indeed, be new. New Zealand was part of a group of countries that put together a proposal to progress disarmament negotiations in 2005 in response to the stalemate then in the CD.

We deemed the deadlock in the CD unacceptable in 2005 and we do so now. But it is particularly regrettable now against the current backdrop of the more propitious global climate for disarmament.

Mr Chairman,

In these circumstances, New Zealand remains grateful for the efforts of the UN Secretary General to move the disarmament agenda forward. We are pleased to join a wide range of other countries here in co-sponsoring the draft resolution, L.34, to take forward the outcomes of the High-Level Meeting held on 24 September. As noted by the distinguished Austrian Ambassador just this morning in introducing this resolution, the text recognises current efforts to revitalize the disarmament machinery and secure progress in multilateral disarmament. These efforts must remain on our agenda.

It is our hope that certainly by the time we meet here in the First Committee next year, progress on revitalizing the disarmament machinery will have been achieved and negotiations will be well underway. This would be a development on which we could indeed rejoice.

All of us have a stake in ensuring that the CD, and the broader disarmament machinery, can respond effectively to the demands of global security. At the moment, they do not. Let us work together to change that.