67th Session of the United Nations General Assembly.
General debate of the 1st Committee.

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Intervention by H.E. Ambassador Carsten Staur,
Permanent Representative of Denmark to the United Nations

Mr Chairman,

As this is Denmark’s first intervention, let me start by congratulating you and the other members of the bureau upon your election and by assuring you of Denmark’s full co-operation and support throughout this session of the 1st Committee.

From the outset Denmark aligns itself with the comprehensive statement made by the European Union on the first day of the General Debate but allow me to make a few remarks from our national perspective.

Denmark’s focus will be on maintaining the momentum gained towards achieving a global Arms Trade Treaty; on our concern over the decade-long stalemate in the Conference on Disarmament and considerations on possible new avenues for making headway for essential multilateral nuclear disarmament talks; and finally, on dealing with the very real proliferation threats that potentially and dangerously erode not only the basis of our global non-proliferation regime but indeed international security and stability as such.
There are many other crucial issues to be discussed at this session, in which we will participate actively. For now I will limit myself to touch upon three issues.

Firstly, Mr Chairman, the **Arms Trade Treaty:**

Denmark is a strong supporter of such a treaty. It should come soon, be universal, legally binding and cover all types of conventional weapons, including ammunition. Also, it should set up robust transfer criteria ensuring respect for human rights and international humanitarian law.

We were encouraged by how remarkably close we were to the end goal at the conference in July: A solid and comprehensive Treaty. This laudable work must now be continued on the basis of the President's draft Treaty text of 26 July 2012. We will work for the proposal to convene a shorter and Final UN Conference on the ATT in early 2013 and we will do our utmost at this conference to contribute to a successful conclusion. We owe this to the individual victims of armed violence and conflict, including the all-too-frequent gender-based violence. And we owe it to the countries and regions that are destabilized by illicit as well as unregulated legal arms trade with serious security, social, economic and humanitarian consequences. Time is now of the essence.

Secondly, Mr Chairman, the **Conference on Disarmament.**

If we are ever to achieve our common goal of a peaceful world free of nuclear weapons and other weapons of mass destruction it is crucial that we are aided
by a strong, comprehensive and dynamic regime for multilateral non-proliferation and disarmament.

In this effort, the Conference on Disarmament, as the single forum for non-proliferation and disarmament negotiations, should play its pivotal role. But it does not. We are deeply concerned by the entrenched stalemate, we have witnessed in the CD for more than a decade. The plain truth of international diplomacy is that a regime that is not progressing is backsliding; and a backsliding regime is not strengthening international peace and stability – quite the contrary.

What is more, with only a third of UN member states being members of the CD, the conference clearly lacks legitimacy, backing and ownership. This is also contrary to the declaration of the first session on disarmament where it is said that and I quote “all states have the right to participate in disarmament negotiations” unquote. The question of enlargement and greater inclusiveness needs to be addressed.

We believe there are numerous issues within the remit of the CD that have great potential and could easily be brought forward if we collectively decide to do so. Negotiations on a Fissile Material Cut-off Treaty are but one example. Nuclear disarmament, negative security assurances and weaponisation of outer space are others. Time has not come to abandon the CD’s central role in multilateral disarmament. But time may have come to consider other avenues to revitalize multilateral disarmament work and prevent further backsliding. This was extensively discussed last year. Perhaps this year it is time to act.
Thirdly and finally, Mr Chairman, **the real proliferation threats** to our collective security.

The proliferation of nuclear weapons and other weapons of mass destruction and their means of delivery remains a growing threat to international and regional peace and security.

The UN Security Council has a key responsibility for non-proliferation. Denmark continues to fully support Security Council Resolutions 1887 and 1540. The Security Council has also adopted a number of country-specific resolutions with the object of upholding the integrity and efficiency of the non-proliferation regime. It is essential that all countries fully implement the Security Council’s resolutions on the Democratic People's Republic of Korea and on the Islamic Republic of Iran.

With regard to Iran, the on-going and expanding enrichment activities, including to a level of 20%, are a cause for great concern. The most recent IAEA Board of Governors resolution, adopted on 13 September, underscored the need for Iran to urgently step up its co-operation with the Agency. We urge Iran to comply fully with all resolutions of the Security Council, the IAEA Board of Governors and with its safeguards agreement so that confidence in the exclusively peaceful nature of Iran’s nuclear activities can be restored. We stand firmly behind the E3+3 led by the High Representative of the European
Union for Foreign and Security Policy in their effort to bring about a negotiated and acceptable diplomatic solution without further delay.

For the First Committee, dealing effectively with the issues of real and urgent proliferation threats, including the risk that non-state actors gain access to nuclear and other weapons of mass destruction, touches upon the basic credibility of our entireendeavour. These issues cannot be ignored and at the end of the day we will be judged by our ability to address them robustly while providing sustainable and forward-looking solutions.

This goes for nuclear weapons, and it goes for other WMD. As far as biological weapons and agents are concerned, I would particularly like to highlight the indispensable role of international co-operation on biosecurity. In this effort Denmark stands ready to contribute in various ways to the common task of reducing proliferation risks and improving the toolkit at the disposal of the international community.

Denmark supports the decision of the 2010 NPT Review Conference to call a 2012 Conference on the establishment of a Middle East zone free of nuclear weapons and other weapons of mass destruction and we stand ready to assist Under-Secretary of State Jaakko Laajava and the Government of Finland, whichever way possible, in the role as facilitator for this admirable and, at this point in time, critical effort. We call on everyone and particularly the countries of the region to work towards a successful Conference in 2012 in an open and constructive manner.
In general, Denmark supports regional zones free of nuclear weapons and other weapons of mass destruction established on the basis of arrangements freely arrived at among the States of the region concerned. We believe that we should explore how the establishment of such zones, including in the Arctic, could become an integral element of a comprehensive multilateral strategy to implement global nuclear disarmament and combat the proliferation of nuclear weapons.

Thank you for your attention.