Statement
on
"Disarmament Machinery"
at the
First Committee of the 67th Session of the
General Assembly of the United Nations

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Thank you very much, Mr Chairman.

Let me first congratulate you on assuming this position and we assure you of our full support in your efforts to achieve a successful outcome in this very important session.

Aligning ourselves fully with the statement distributed by the European Union, we would like to make some additional remarks.

The enthusiasm for international disarmament agreements and unilateral initiatives that characterized the early years of the post-Cold War period has been steadily replaced by a more pragmatic approach. Today the dominant mood is realistic, rather than idealistic. Estonia remains a strong supporter of a multilateral approach to disarmament, but one cannot ignore the fact that multilateral disarmament negotiations have not been able to deliver tangible results for a too long time.

Indeed there are some positive dynamics in this process - we have recently concluded an ambitious Non Proliferation Treaty (NPT) Review Conference Action Plan and accordingly there have been several Nuclear Weapon States follow-up meetings, discussing transparency, verification and confidence-building measures. Still, the recent 15th anniversary of the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty (CTBT) reminds us that the real success stories of multilateral disarmament treaties can be found not even from the last decade but from the last century. The track record of bilateral disarmament negotiations has been recently more promising and produced more results than multilateral efforts. The conclusion and the entry into force of the new START Treaty in 2011 between the United States and the Russian Federation is one example of that.

The inability of the Conference on Disarmament (CD) to fulfill its mandate over a decade by now is a big concern for effective multilateralism. We have carefully studied different ideas, how to take forward multilateral disarmament negotiations, presented in several 1st Committee draft resolutions before us. We acknowledge that despite the stalemate in the CD continues and no breakthrough is foreseen this year, the CD still remains the core multilateral disarmament environment and the negotiations of the Fissile Material Cut-off Treaty (FMCT) should be concluded within its framework. However we might consider the idea of discussing the possible elements of FMCT in some other forum. The most important is to find the political will and momentum to start the discussions. The institutions are made for serving the noble ideas, not to take them as a hostage.

Please take my previous remarks not as an official proposal but rather as food for thought or a building block in the collective effort to break the deadlock and move forward with multilateral disarmament negotiations. We are still very much committed to the idea of revitalizing the CD, not unplugging it. As a testimony for that, we wish to reiterate our request to participate fully and equally in the disarmament discussions as a full member of the CD. We believe that expansion of the membership could become an achievement for the CD and raise its relevance.

Thank you, Mr Chairman.