Statement by Ambassador Uffe A. Balslev

Undersecretary for Disarmament, Non-Proliferation and Arms Control

Head of delegation of the Kingdom of Denmark to the 2nd Session of the Preparatory Committee for the 2015 NPT Review Conference

General Debate

22 April 2013
Thank you Mr Chairman,

Let me join others in congratulating you on your election as chair of this PrepCom. Denmark associates itself with the statement made by the European Union. I can therefore concentrate on a few issues of particular importance to my delegation.

As a long-standing member of the Vienna Group of 10 that has now existed for more than 30 years, Denmark fully associates itself with the statement made by Ambassador Woolcott of Australia.

I recommend all of the six working papers presented by the group that generally underline the key role played by the IAEA. In this regard Denmark underlines the need for insuring adequate means and resources to uphold the Agency’s capabilities, particularly in the areas of nuclear verification, security and safety.

One paper relates to the Comprehensive Test Ban Treaty. The CTBT touches exactly on the issues of horizontal and vertical proliferation that strains the disarmament processes today. All remaining countries, that have yet to do so, should with all expediency sign and ratify the CTBT and refrain from nuclear testing, any other nuclear explosions and from the use of new nuclear weapons technologies.

Furthermore, we underscore the crucial role that export controls play in our endeavours under the NPT. We urge all States to establish and maintain effective national export controls for nuclear and related dual-use goods and technology, including as required by UN Security Council resolution 1540, and we commend the work being done under regimes such as the Nuclear Suppliers Group, the Zangger Committee, the Australia Group, the Wassenaar Arrangement and the MTCR.

At previous meetings Denmark has joined the group of countries behind a statement expressing deep concern by the devastating immediate and long-term humanitarian effects that could follow from the use of nuclear weapons; and so again at this PrepCom with the statement presented by South Africa. In our view this third-track approach to disarmament and non-proliferation is not meant to undermine existing multilateral or bilateral nuclear disarmament mechanisms. They have indeed produced reductions that we welcome. Nor is it meant to reinterpret
well-established international humanitarian law. We hope through a fact-based discussion to expand the group of concerned countries, including with the P.5., and to increase awareness of these humanitarian consequences.

Increased awareness will help us in our efforts to raise thresholds and significantly diminish the role of nuclear weapons in military and defence doctrines. And it will help us redouble our efforts for a continued, gradual and irreversible reduction of all nuclear weapons, including strategic, non-strategic, deployed and non-deployed weapons, aiming at their total elimination.

The gradual approach also assumes a geographical form. Denmark supports the continued development of internationally recognized nuclear weapon free zones, established on the basis of agreements freely arrived at among states of the regions concerned.

At the 2010 Review Conference we decided on a conference on the establishment of a Middle East zone free of nuclear weapons as well as other weapons of mass destruction and their means of delivery scheduled to take place in 2012. Its postponement was indeed regrettable. But it was a missed deadline not a lost opportunity. We expect the Conference to be convened as soon as possible and urge constructive participation by all States of the region. We applaud the continued exceptional work of the facilitator Ambassador Laajava and stand ready to contribute if and when it could be useful.

The government of Denmark also finds the proposal for an Arctic zone free of weapons of mass destruction worthy of further pursuit. It could prove to be a useful contribution to global peace and arms control from the countries and peoples of the High North. Denmark will continue to engage our close friends and neighbours in the Arctic in discussions on this topic in the non-confrontational and constructive spirit that pervades all our cooperation the Arctic.

Mr Chairman,

The NPT remains the cornerstone of nuclear disarmament and global non-proliferation. But it is also a cornerstone under stress: By the more than a decade-long stalemate in the CD; and by successive set-backs for global non-proliferation that undermine both regional and global peace and security. The lack of progress in restoring confidence in the exclusively peaceful nature of Iran’s nuclear activities,
including at the latest meeting with the E3+3 in Almaty, is deeply worrying. There is an urgent need for Iran to step up its cooperation with the IAEA. The recent nuclear and missile tests by the DPRK are equally worrying. We urge both governments to comply fully with all their obligations, including resolutions of the UN Security Council and the IAEA Board of Governors.

The international community expects us to address these challenges to the integrity and credibility of the NPT in a resolute way. It expects a productive outcome of this PrepCom, and it expects a clear affirmation of our commitment to actively implement the Action Plan agreed at the 2010 Review Conference.

With you in the chair, Mr Chairman, I feel confident and optimistic that we will get there and I can assure you of the full support of the Danish delegation.

Thank you for your attention.