Statement by Ambassador Uffe A. Balslev

Undersecretary for Disarmament, Non-Proliferation and Arms Control

Head of delegation of the Kingdom of Denmark to the 3rd Session of the Preparatory Committee for the 2015 NPT Review Conference

General Debate

28 April 2014
Thank you Mr Chairman,

Let me join others in congratulating you on your election as chair of this PrepCom. We look to your leadership to turn this last and most important PrepCom into a solid foundation for forward-looking decisions at the Review Conference next year.

Denmark fully associates itself with the comprehensive statement made by the European Union.

As member of the Vienna Group of 10, Denmark also associates itself with the statement made by Australia and with the one, fused working paper the group submitted for this year’s session.

On top of Denmark’s significant regular contributions to the IAEA’s budget and Technical Cooperation Fund we are proud this year to have pledged an extra €1.1 million to the IAEA’s voluntary Nuclear Security Fund and €270,000 for the work of the Agency related to monitoring and verifying the implementation of the Joint Plan of Action with Iran.

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Mr Chairman,

The importance for international peace and security of nuclear disarmament, non-proliferation and safe and secure peaceful uses of nuclear energy cannot be overestimated. We should never lose sight of the catastrophic and unacceptable humanitarian consequences should nuclear weapons ever be used. Scientific conferences have made clear that we would be talking about damage to our global environment, global socio-economic development and global health for generations to come.

The sentiment in public opinion and among our political masters on these issues is not that of fatigue but of impatience. They want us to redouble our efforts to seek concrete action towards elimination of the risk that these immensely destructive and indiscriminate weapons are ever used; and seek new momentum towards our shared, ultimate goal of their total, verifiable and irreversible abolition.

The NPT remains the cornerstone of this work. It cannot be replaced but it is under pressure and we are behind schedule.

We are short of progress in nuclear disarmament. The nuclear weapons states will report to us at this session on their progress so far. The Danish government acknowledges the considerable progress achieved in reducing deployed warheads
and stockpiles. We particularly welcome the New START Treaty. But no logic can defend or legitimize the possession of still more than 17,000 nuclear warheads on this globe or that the Comprehensive Test Ban Treaty has not yet entered into force.

We thus share the ambitions expressed in President Obama’s speech in Berlin last summer, including the call to seek bold and reciprocal reductions of US and Russian non-strategic nuclear weapons in Europe.

We are short of progress on the non-proliferation agenda: We welcome the Joint Plan of Action agreed between the E3+3 and Iran. And we are encouraged by the reporting from the IAEA that Teheran is complying with both that agreement and the Framework for Cooperation between Iran and the Agency. But before we have achieved a comprehensive, long-term settlement, which restores international confidence in the exclusively peaceful nature of the Iranian nuclear programme and the absence of any military dimensions, it is too early to rejoice.

We are deeply concerned that the DPRK continues down its dangerous and irrational path of ballistic missile launches, nuclear tests, uranium enrichment and construction of a Light Water Reactor in flagrant violation of its international obligations.

First and foremost, we are short of trust and credibility.

Credibility and trust in the multilateral disarmament machinery were again this year worn thin by the continued and unacceptable stalemate in the Conference on Disarmament.

Credibility and trust were lost with the Russian Federation’s illegal military intervention in Ukraine and purported annexation of Crimea. It violated a host of Russia’s international obligations. In an NPT context, it most deplorably breached the Budapest Memorandum of 1994; an otherwise shining star of security assurances and commitment to nuclear disarmament freely entered into by a responsible and far-sighted Ukrainian government as it acceded to the NPT as a non-nuclear weapon state.

And credibility and trust have been shaken by our inability to convene the foreseen conference on the Middle East as a zone free of weapons of mass destruction and their delivery systems attended by all States of the region. We hope that the Glion meetings and the professional work of the facilitator Ambassador Laajava may redress this before the Review Conference.
Confidence and trust must be built. We should do so by pursuing a **building block approach** with parallel and simultaneous steps; where the faithful implementation of the Action Plan from 2010 should have clear focus. This approach is laid out in the working paper submitted by 20 countries, including Denmark, for this session.

Trust is exactly what is needed to gradually bond the building blocks together into a multilateral framework ensuring **general and complete nuclear disarmament** as expressly desired in the Treaty. This is a vision we would not want to lose sight of; nor of the road that could lead us there. Trust and credibility may have regressed in the past year but that should only induce us to work even harder at this session and in the year to come.

Thank you for your attention.