



NORWAY

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General Debate

STATEMENT

BY

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Mr. Chairman,

Allow me first to join the others in congratulating you on your election as chairman of this committee and assure you of my delegation's full cooperation.

The horrific attack on the United States a year ago demonstrated to the world that there are terrorists who will stop at nothing in their efforts to disrupt and destroy. It also demonstrated that international terrorism constitutes a threat to international peace and security. This threat must be fought by all available means in accordance with the Charter of the United Nations.

We can only imagine the impact if terrorists were to use weapons of mass destruction now or in the future. This is why disarmament, arms control and non-proliferation measures are so important in our efforts to combat terrorism. The challenge for this committee is to identify measures and ways which can deny terrorists the possibility of acquiring and using weapons of mass destruction and their means of delivery.

We recall that last year's session of this committee adopted by consensus a resolution recognizing the close link between international terrorism, illicit arms trafficking and the illegal movement of nuclear, chemical, biological and other potentially deadly materials. In order to build a common response to global threats, the resolution reaffirmed multilateralism as a core principle for disarmament and non-proliferation and expressed concern about the lack of progress in this area.

Now, a year later, we should ask ourselves whether we have lived up to our commitments. Or are we still dealing with multilateral non-proliferation and disarmament in a "business as usual" manner? I am thinking of the lack of progress in important areas such as negotiation of a fissile material treaty, universalization of important treaties such as the Non-proliferation treaty and the Comprehensive Test Ban Treaty, and compliance measures for the Biological Weapons Convention.

There is no doubt that the international community has responded forcefully in a number of areas to the threat posed by terrorism. At the same time my delegation continues to be concerned about the lack of sufficient progress in multilateral disarmament and non-proliferation diplomacy and of sufficient recognition of the importance that work in this area also has for our fight against international terrorism. We call upon all members of the UN family to renew and fulfil their individual and collective commitments.

Mr. Chairman,

The Norwegian government continues to see the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons as the cornerstone for international non-proliferation and disarmament efforts. The action plan and 13 practical steps for the systematic and progressive achievement of nuclear disarmament identified in the Document from the NPT 2000 Review Conference are key reference points here. Regrettably, there is still slow progress in the implementation of some of the 13 steps.

A welcome development is the US-Russian agreement on a new treaty on further reductions in strategic nuclear warheads. Reductions in the numbers of operationally deployed strategic warheads will be an important contribution to the implementation of the decisions of the 2000 NPT Review Conference and to continued strategic stability and enhanced security in the new international context. While welcoming reductions in strategic nuclear warheads, Norway underlines the need for verifiable and irreversible reductions.

At the NPT Preparatory Committee in April there was a widely held view, which was also expressed in the Chairman's Factual Summary, that non-strategic nuclear weapons must be further reduced in a verifiable and irreversible manner. We hope to see an early start of negotiations on further substantial cuts in the arsenals of tactical nuclear weapons.

The unilateral declarations by the US and Russian presidents in 1991-92 resulted in the elimination of a great number of tactical nuclear warheads. These declarations are still relevant and should be preserved and strengthened. We encourage the adoption of transparency measures such as reporting on the implementation of these two important declarations and reciprocal information exchange by the two countries involved. In this regard we would like to point to the transparency measures that NATO has proposed to Russia. It could also be useful to consider how the important US Cooperative Threat

Reduction Programme can contribute to the safe storage and dismantlement of tactical nuclear warheads in Russia.

Universal adherence to the Comprehensive Nuclear Test Ban Treaty and its early entry into force continue to be a high priority for Norway, despite the difficulties that have been encountered in this process. Self-imposed moratoria on nuclear testing are a useful measure pending the entry into force of the CTBT. Such moratoria cannot, however, replace the legally binding commitments represented by the signing and ratification of the Treaty. The verification regime is at the core of the Treaty. The full and speedy implementation of the international monitoring system – without waiting for the entry into force of the treaty – would be a significant confidence and security-building measure. Financial and diplomatic support for the Preparatory Commission of the Comprehensive Nuclear Test Ban Treaty Organization must continue unabated.

Mr. Chairman,

It is with great regret that we note the continuing stalemate in the Conference of Disarmament. This situation is undercutting the credibility of the Conference as well as of multilateralism in disarmament and arms control. We sincerely hope that the present consultations on the Conference's work programme will finally be successful, and that it will be able to start substantive work by 2003. In this respect we support the recent cross-regional initiative by five former presidents of the Conference.

We consider that the top priority for the Conference should be to start negotiations on a non-discriminatory multilateral and effectively verifiable Fissile Material Cut-off Treaty. A Cut-off Treaty is the next logical step on the multilateral arms control agenda and is essential if we are to advance nuclear non-proliferation. As long as there is a deadlock in the Conference on Disarmament, we welcome the parallel process to identify and assess particular and technical aspects of a Fissile Material Cut-off Treaty.

We need to deal with the entire field of weapons-usable fissile material in a comprehensive manner. All nuclear-weapon states should conclude and implement arrangements to place fissile material that is designated as no longer required for military purposes under the IAEA verification regime. We advocate the principle of irreversible disposition in order to ensure that excess stockpiles of fissile material remain outside the military nuclear cycle. To that end IAEA monitoring is required.

While initiating Fissile Material Cut-off Treaty negotiations, the Conference on Disarmament should also address in a substantive manner the other issues on its agenda such as negative security assurances, prevention of an arms race in outer space (PAROS) and nuclear disarmament.

Mr. Chairman,

The "10+10 over 10" initiative taken by the G-8 this summer to intensify and improve coordination of international efforts against the spread of weapons and materials of mass destruction is an important initiative that has our full support. Since the mid-nineties Norway and Russia have cooperated closely on nuclear safety and waste issues and, more recently, also on chemical weapons destruction. This cooperation grew out of environmental concerns, but clearly there is a close link between environmental issues such as the safe disposal of nuclear waste and nuclear non-proliferation and prevention of terrorism.

Mr. Chairman,

Norway believes that strengthening the Biological Weapons Convention must be a priority for the international community, especially in the light of the use terrorists could make of such weapons. We should use the Fifth Review Conference to reaffirm our commitment to preventing the production, proliferation and use of biological weapons when the conference resumes in a few weeks' time.

We urge all states parties to the Biological Weapons Convention to demonstrate sufficient flexibility so that a consensus decision can be reached when the Fifth Review Conference resumes. But we need to explore further national as well as multilateral measures to ensure compliance with the Convention.

My delegation would also like to reaffirm Norway's strong commitment to the universality of the Chemical Weapons Convention. We expect full and effective implementation of its provisions by all states parties. The obligation to destroy existing arsenals of chemical weapons continues to lie with the possessor state.

Mr. Chairman,

Norway continues to be concerned about the proliferation of ballistic missile systems capable of delivering weapons of mass destruction. We must curb and reverse this trend as an important part of our common effort to combat terrorism by state and non-state actors. We need a broad and comprehensive strategy involving political, economic and diplomatic means. We see the work on an international Code of Conduct against the proliferation of ballistic missiles as a first step and as a basis for strengthening international efforts in this field. We encourage all countries to join this important initiative.

Mr. Chairman,

The UN Programme of Action on Small Arms and Light Weapons is a good starting point for intensifying our efforts to deal with what Secretary General Kofi Annan has described as weapons of mass destruction in slow motion. The emphasis must now be on full implementation of this programme at the national, regional and global levels. We are pleased to see the encouraging momentum that is taking place on all continents. Norway's emphasis is on tracing and brokering, stockpile management and destruction of surpluses, disarmament and development, DD&R and last but not least on assisting affected countries.

Let me reiterate our firm conviction that we need a broad mobilization of governments, civil society, NGOs, the UN family and regional organizations in the follow-up activities. The Norwegian Government stands ready to contribute both financially and politically to the successful implementation of the Programme of Action. We are currently working together with a number of governments, regional organizations and NGOs on close to twenty different small arms projects.

Mr. Chairman,

We are encouraged by the growing number of signatures and ratifications of the Anti-personnel Mine Ban Convention and by

- the clear reduction in the use of anti-personnel mines,
- the dramatic drop in the production of these mines,
- the almost complete halt in trade and transfer of anti-personnel mines,
- the considerable funding available for humanitarian mine action, and most importantly,
- the significant decline in the number of new mine victims.

This clearly illustrates that the Mine Ban Convention is becoming an international norm, and that multilateralism can work. There is a strong partnership between all states parties and across all regions. There is a strong partnership between governments and the ICBL and ICRC.

But there is no room for complacency. There are still too many victims and there are still large areas of land which need to be marked and cleared. We therefore need continued political and financial commitment in order to reach the humanitarian aims we have set ourselves. Norway's commitment to mine action remains as strong as ever.

Mr. Chairman,

Norway welcomes the successful outcome of the Second Review Conference of the Convention on the Prohibition or Restriction on the Use of Certain Conventional Weapons (CCW). We were greatly encouraged by the decision to extend the scope of the Convention to internal conflicts.

We were also pleased to see that there was consensus on setting up an expert group to consider a mandate for negotiating a protocol on Explosive Remnants of War to the Convention. We hope that it will be possible to reach agreement by the end of the year on a mandate for negotiating such a legally

binding instrument. Within the CCW, Norway also supports the efforts to better address the humanitarian challenges posed by anti-vehicle mines.

Norway welcomes efforts to promote education on disarmament and non-proliferation. The report by the Secretary General both underlines the need for more efforts in this area and that we need to reach out to all groups.

Mr. Chairman,

Effective multilateral cooperation is more important than ever, and forging a solid coalition to promote non-proliferation and disarmament is crucial. We hope this session of the First Committee will help mobilize the political will of governments to continue ongoing multilateral initiatives and step up efforts to find solutions and get moving in areas that are still deadlocked.