



# NORWAY

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GENERAL ASSEMBLY  
Fifty-eight Session

First Committee:  
General Debate

STATEMENT

BY

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Mr. Chairman,

I would like to begin by joining others in congratulating you on your election as Chairman of this important Committee of the UN General Assembly. The First Committee has an important role in contributing to international peace and security. This task is even more important today, when we are facing new security threats. I am confident that under your leadership we will have a successful session.

I would also like to express support for the EU statement, with which Norway has aligned itself.

Mr. Chairman,

The security environment has changed profoundly in recent years. International terrorism and the proliferation of weapons of mass destruction have become major threats to international peace and security. Terrorists take advantage of weak and failed states, from where they can operate and plan new, devastating attacks. Afghanistan before 9/11 is a case in point. We can imagine the horrific implications if terrorist groups gain possession of weapons of mass destruction.

The international community must therefore respond to the new proliferation challenges. Much has been achieved through the UN, the Security Council and broad-based coalitions. We strongly support the Proliferation Security Initiative and the current EU efforts as set out in the Summit Declaration from Thessaloniki.

Multilateralism is a core principle of arms control and non-proliferation. We must ensure that existing multilateral instruments are sufficiently equipped to meet the new proliferation threats. The First Committee should be a central arena for dealing with these fundamental questions.

Mr. Chairman,

Universal adherence and compliance with the multilateral disarmament and non-proliferation treaties will provide us with added collective security. Thus, given the new security landscape, we should consider how to further strengthen their enforcement provisions. There must be a heavy price for non-compliance. We are pleased that the Secretary General raised this question in his report to the General Assembly on the Implementation of the United Nations Millennium Declaration. We would expect the Security Council to follow up on this challenge.

Mr. Chairman,

Norway is particularly concerned that the Non-Proliferation Treaty is under stress. The NPT has for decades been a cornerstone of our collective security, and the norms set by the Treaty are even more important today.

We must therefore preserve and strengthen the integrity and authority of the NPT. The current Review Cycle is a good instrument for this purpose, and we must do what we can to ensure that the 2005 Review Conference has a positive outcome. We must all contribute to this end and be prepared to make the necessary compromises.

It is important that the 2005 Conference further reinforces the non-proliferation norm through strengthened safeguards. Any nation seeking nuclear technology for peaceful programmes must be obliged to implement the IAEA Additional Protocol to the Comprehensive Safeguards.

It is also essential that the 2005 Conference leads to progress on the disarmament agenda. We welcome the Moscow Treaty as a substantial contribution to the reductions in strategic arsenals. But we must advance further, and Norway reiterates its call for irreversible reductions in nuclear weapons, including non-strategic weapons.

We sincerely regret that the Comprehensive Test-Ban Treaty (CTBT) has not yet entered into force, even though this is an obligation under the NPT. We welcome the self-imposed test moratoria. Such moratoria cannot, however, replace multilateral, legally binding, verifiable commitments. The recent Article XIV Conference in Vienna showed that the vast majority of nations represented in this hall are committed to the Treaty. We must preserve the integrity of the norms set by the CTBT. We are concerned that the development of new weapons may result in the resumption of tests. The nuclear threshold must be retained.

The last NPT Review Conference called for a commencement of negotiations on a Fissile Materials Cut-off Treaty (FMCT). Norway shares the broad international agreement that the FMCT is the next logical step on our multilateral disarmament agenda. We welcome the existing moratoria declared by some nuclear weapons states. But a legally binding prohibition provides the best guarantee against the future production of fissile materials for weapon purposes.

The impasse in the Conference on Disarmament has prevented us from moving ahead. Multilateralism has clearly not yet delivered in this case. The CD has remained passive while new nations have apparently been trying to develop nuclear weapons.

The announcement by the Democratic People's Republic of Korea to withdraw from the NPT is a serious challenge to the authority and integrity of the Treaty. We call on the DPRK to reverse its course of action, to comply with its obligations under the NPT and to co-operate fully and unconditionally with the IAEA.

The six-party meeting in Beijing at the end of August was an important step toward this end. The dialogue must continue. The aim must be to find a lasting settlement for stability and security on the Korean peninsula and in the region.

As a general rule, all matters relating to possible non-compliance with the NPT regime must be dealt with in a multilateral and transparent manner. In any well-documented case of non-compliance the IAEA must be given access to investigate, draw conclusions and decide on the necessary action in accordance with its mandate. This applies to the DPRK as well as Iran.

The IAEA Board of Governors has sent a clear message to Iran. It should be in Iran's interest to co-operate fully with this UN agency. The only way for the country to restore international confidence in its peaceful intentions is to respond to the IAEA resolution of 12 September.

Mr. Chairman,

With respect to other types of weapons of mass destruction, we are satisfied with the positive outcome of the first Review Conference to the Chemical Weapons Convention. But we have not yet achieved full universalisation of this important instrument. Too many countries have chosen not to be bound by CWC obligations. More has to be done on the destruction and eventual elimination of existing stockpiles of chemical weapons. As long as these stockpiles exist, they can fall into the wrong hands.

There is also an urgent need to deal with biological weapons. No one is safe from biological terrorism. We must therefore further reinforce the Biological and Toxins Weapons Convention and uphold the authority of the 1925 Geneva Protocol in order to prevent biological agents or toxins from being used as weapons. All nations should adopt and implement adequate national legislation for implementing their BTWC obligations. We must promote full universalisation of the Convention.

The Hague Code of Conduct is essential in our overall efforts to halt the spread of weapons of mass destruction and their means of delivery. The work for universal adherence to the Code must continue. Our long-term objective should be that the Code is translated into a legally binding and globally accepted agreement.

Mr. Chairman,

Certain conventional weapons have been described as “weapons of mass destruction in slow motion”. Each year they are responsible for millions of deaths and injuries. Anti-personnel mines, unexploded ordinance and the proliferation of illicit small arms pose a challenge to human security, a challenge that must be dealt with in multilateral fora.

We must work to strengthen the Convention on Certain Conventional Weapons (CCW) with a new legally binding protocol on Explosive Remnants of War and a protocol dealing with the humanitarian challenges posed by anti-vehicle mines.

We also need to implement and further enforce the UN Programme of Action on Small Arms and Light Weapons. Norway has supported the efforts to establish a new instrument on tracing and marking. We have also devoted considerable resources to combating the illicit brokering of small arms.

The Mine Ban Convention is a response to an urgent humanitarian challenge. We must renew our political and financial commitment to the Convention. Norway has taken a lead through the establishment of a Resource Mobilisation Contact Group.

Mr. Chairman,

The multilateral approach to disarmament, arms control and non-proliferation has been essential for our collective security. For a long time this has served us well. But now new challenges have emerged.

We agree with the Secretary-General that the performance of the international community in dealing with new threats and challenges is uneven. We have to be innovative if we are to revive multilateralism and get the international community to work better together.

The United Nations is at the centre of the multilateral efforts on non-proliferation, arms control and disarmament. The UN General Assembly has

played an important role in addressing new topics and setting the agenda for multilateral negotiations. But again, we fully concur with the Secretary-General's view that it should not be shameful or embarrassing to question the adequacy or the efficiency of UN bodies.

We welcome consultations on the functioning of the First Committee of the UN General Assembly. The current format of the General Debate prevents us from addressing key security matters, and we do not believe that an overcrowded agenda requiring action on more than 50 resolutions and decisions will enhance our collective security. Many of these resolutions are forgotten almost as soon as they are adopted.

The First Committee should focus on major security challenges and promote a unity of purpose on how to address new threats. The Committee should serve as inspiration for the international community.

We are circulating a non-paper today containing ideas we believe could make the First Committee more relevant, and some suggestions on how to enhance the Committee's role. We believe that the number of resolutions should be reduced, that we should strive to manage our time more efficiently, and that we should have more integrated thematic discussions.

We know that other countries have put forward their ideas. We are pleased that there will be open-ended informal consultations after the General Debate, and we think they should continue after the current session of the Committee.

An enhanced role for the First Committee will have a positive spin-off for both the Conference on Disarmament and the UN Disarmament Commission. Our aim is to empower the CD to do what it is supposed to do: negotiate treaties that enhance our collective security. We now need to reflect on how the UN Disarmament Commission can provide added value.

Mr. Chairman,

The purpose of reforming the multilateral institutions on disarmament and non-proliferation is to make them more relevant in a changing security environment. If we fail to do this, we run the risk of reducing the influence of the UN as well as multilateralism in general.

We are facing new challenges. We have an opportunity to work better together to meet these challenges. This will strengthen our common security. Let us take this opportunity.