



The Permanent Mission of Iceland to the United Nations

**Statement by
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Madam Chairperson,

Let me begin by saying how pleased I am to see you, Ambassador Juul of Norway, a close friend, chairing the First Committee this session. I would also like to congratulate other members of the bureau on their election.

Iceland, as a member of the European Economic Area, aligned itself with the statement of the European Union, delivered by Finland at the commencement of the general debate, but I would like to make a further brief remark.

Madam Chairperson,

For a small country like Iceland, a world where relations among states is governed by the rule of law is of fundamental importance. The international community has developed various ways and means to govern international activity and interaction between states where rights and obligations of states are stipulated. Disarmament and arms control treaties and conventions which have been negotiated over the recent decades form an integral part of this system. In recent years, however, and as so many have mentioned, we have seen setbacks in the multilateral field of disarmament and non-proliferation.

Two weeks ago, on 20 September, a joint Ministerial Statement was launched to support the Comprehensive Nuclear Test Ban Treaty (CTBT), on the 10th anniversary of the Treaty's opening for signature. The Foreign Minister of Iceland was among the ministers who put her name on the statement. Nuclear testing has been regarded as the engine of nuclear proliferation. The ratification of the CTBT is crucial in halting and reversing the reliance on weapons of mass destruction. In spite of strong global aspirations, manifested in 176 signatures and 135 ratifications, the entry into force of this important treaty has regrettably not been achieved. We encourage states that have not yet done so to ratify the Treaty.

The Non-Proliferation Treaty (NPT) has served as the main pillar in global efforts to prevent the spread of nuclear weapons. Credible and effective verification is a key component of the NPT-regime in order to prevent violations. Iceland supports efforts to find diplomatic solutions to the many questions surrounding Iran's nuclear program. The Iranian authorities must fully comply with the International Atomic Energy Authority's requirements for transparency in the development of their nuclear program.

Madam Chairperson,

In his report on the work of the Organization (A/61/1) the Secretary-General shares his concern that the international community faces two divergent courses, and I quote: "One path, that of active engagement by all Member States, can take us to a world in which the proliferation of nuclear weapons is restricted and reversed through trust, dialogue and negotiated agreement. The other more dangerous course could lead to a world of fearful instability where such weapons are the currency of international relations and in which non-State actors acquire the means to carry out terrorism with potentially catastrophic consequences." All of us want to make the world a better and safer place. We should all make our contribution to ensuring that the former path, which the Secretary-General describes, is taken.

Madam Chairperson,

I would like to highlight the issue of small arms and light weapons. Our understanding of the use and impact of such weapons has increased during the last few years. The toll such weapons take is widespread and complex, threatening stability of states and security and well-being of people. Iceland is deeply disappointed that during the past summer we were unable to reach an agreement on the best way forward to tackle illegal trade in small arms and light weapons.

In line with the need to control the undesirable proliferation of conventional arms, Iceland favours an international treaty to establish common standards for the global trade in conventional arms. We support the initiative of a group of Member States, that will in the course of this session, introduce a draft resolution to establish a group of governmental experts to examine the feasibility, scope and draft parameters for a comprehensive, legally binding instrument establishing common international standards for the import, export and transfer of conventional arms.

Finally Madam Chairperson,

Iceland attaches great importance to the reform of the United Nations. This includes improvements in working methods of the General Assembly and its main committees. In this context we can subscribe to the view expressed by Japan yesterday, that we simply make sure that we implement resolution 59/95 on Improving the effectiveness of the methods of work of the First Committee.

Thank you Madam Chairperson.