



NORWAY

**United Nations
First Committee, 2nd meeting**

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**STATEMENT
BY**

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State Secretary**

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Madam Chairperson,

It is a pleasure to see you presiding over this meeting. Your appointment is an honour for the Norwegian government.

Your task is not an easy one. This session of the First Committee takes place against a rather grim and frustrating background. Not much has been achieved in the field of disarmament and non-proliferation in recent years:

- We failed to agree on a substantive review of the Non-Proliferation Treaty in May last year.
- We failed to agree on disarmament and non-proliferation at the UN Summit in September last year.
- We failed to agree on any follow-up of the UN Action Programme on small arms and light weapons just a few months ago.

In short: the present international security environment is not particularly conducive to multilateral cooperation in the field of arms control. We shall have to change this.

Madam Chairperson,

Supporting arms control measures is not a question of pure idealism. It is not based on an altruistic wish to promote the common good. Actually it is about self-interest. All countries would be well served by peace, security and stability, regionally as well as globally. Regrettably, lack of mutual trust among members of the international community has slowed progress in the recent years.

Despite this difficult background we cannot surrender to passivity. Last year, Norway initiated cooperation between 7 states from all geographic regions. Together, we try to pave the way for a global consensus on steps to sustain and strengthen arms control and non-proliferation. We will continue our efforts in connection with the upcoming NPT-review cycle.

Madam Chairperson,

This session of the First Committee creates new opportunities. As we know, no legally binding decisions or resolutions are to be adopted. But it is in our hands to send clear messages that may turn some of the negative trends we have witnessed in recent years.

Let me give a few examples:

1. Preparations for the next NPT Review Conference will soon start. This General Assembly should be able to agree on the way to proceed. An early agreement on unresolved issues will create new optimism.

2. Global stocks of weapon-grade fissile material are in great excess. This session of the First Committee could contribute to efforts towards commencing negotiations on a Treaty banning the production of fissile material for nuclear weapons purposes. Such negotiations would supplement national and multilateral efforts to substitute use of weapon-grade fissile material in the civilian sector with low-enriched uranium.
3. A new and crucial Review Conference of the Biological Weapons Convention will be convened later this year. This committee has the opportunity to send a strong signal to the States Parties and the international community that progress in ridding the world of biological weapons should be actively sought.
4. Illicit trade in small arms and light weapons is a subject matter for this committee. Small arms may not have the same terrible cataclysmic potential as weapons of mass destruction. Nonetheless, small arms are responsible for the overwhelming number of lives lost in wars around the globe. It is my sincere hope that consensus-based progress can be achieved. It would serve to rectify the failure of the Review Conference of the UN Action Programme just a few months ago.

Time prevents me from addressing all important issues in this year's session of the First Committee. Let me just emphasise that nuclear disarmament and the prevention of an arms race in outer space are important themes that should be on our agenda.

Madam Chairperson,

I am grateful for your ambition to continue the improvement of our working methods. We should enhance our efforts to avoid unnecessary duplication and repetition. There can be too much of a good thing, and earlier sessions have seen a large number of competing resolutions.

I also support your efforts to better include civil society in our deliberations.

I hope that you, Madam Chairperson, will inspire us to be pragmatic and constructive.

I am confident that you will enjoy the full cooperation of all delegations present here. I wish you all the best.

Thank you.