

62nd SESSION OF THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY

Statement by

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Check Against Delivery

Mr. Chairperson,

Allow me to begin by congratulating you on your appointment as chair of the First Committee and assure you of my delegation's full support and cooperation in reaching a successful outcome to the deliberations. As we intend to take the floor during the thematic discussions, I will limit my statement to several issues which warrant, in our opinion, special attention.

Mr. Chairperson,

Israel attaches great importance to the export control regimes and their evident contribution to efforts aimed at curbing weapons of mass destruction (WMD) proliferation. It has traditionally exercised a robust national export control system. In the past years, Israel embarked on a legal and institutional reform process designed to ensure that its export control system goes hand in hand with the highest international standards set by the NSG, AG, MTCR and Wassenaar supplier's regimes. This process will undergo major progress with the new Export Control Law, passed at the Knesset (the Israeli Parliament) in July this year, which will enter into force on the 31 December 2007. This law regulates control over the Munitions List of the Wassenaar Arrangement, and complements the Export Control Order which entered into force on 1 January 2007, regulating control over dual-use items and technologies based on the dual-use list of the Wassenaar Arrangement. This law also follows the Import and Export Control Order (Chemical, Biological and Nuclear Exports) from 2004, and places Israel among those states which exercise the highest levels of control over exports of sensitive and dual use items.

Mr. Chairperson,

During the general debate, most speakers referred to the international concerns emanating from the development and proliferation of weapons of mass destruction and their delivery systems. Israel shares these concerns. Moreover, special attention should be given to the proliferation of know-how and technologies.

The danger arising from the existence of such weapons and systems in the hands of reckless and irresponsible actors, such as rouge states and terrorist groups, is apparent. The international community must therefore increase its determination to act swiftly in addressing cases of concern.

The clarity of the message provided by the international community, to those who engage in clandestine WMD programs, must not be dimmed by prolonged efforts aimed at reaching unanimity at all cost. While there is much to be gained from reaching consensus, it should be clearly stipulated that there is much to lose by allowing the development of such programs.

During the past year, concerns over the clandestine Iranian nuclear program have not been alleviated. On the contrary. It is now well understood that Iran's endeavors in the nuclear sphere constitute a threat not just to the regional stability but also to the global strategic situation. Taken together with its aggressive pursuit of delivery systems capability, Iran should be regarded as a threat well beyond the geographical limits of the Middle East. Iran's activities in the WMD field, which stand in contrast to its

international legal obligations, undermines the global non proliferation regime and emphasizes the threat posed by countries in non-compliance. Just last month, during his address to the General Assembly, the Iranian President flaunted his country's non-compliance with Security Council resolutions, saying "the nuclear issue of Iran is now closed and has turned into an ordinary Agency matter." Iran's intransigence can be seen in its perpetual violation of Security Council resolutions and sheer defiance of the international community.

Mr. Chairperson,

The growing interest in and demand for nuclear power has evidently manifested itself during the past year. While the need to address growing national energy needs with a non-polluting energy source is understandable and justifiable, the international community should also consider ways to minimize the inherent proliferation risks associated with the dissemination of nuclear technologies. Given the dual nature of such technologies, avenues must be found to address legitimate energy needs without increasing concerns over possible abuse for military purposes.

Like states in other regions of the world, countries in the Middle East have similarly shown growing interest in nuclear energy. The striving to obtain a clean and safe energy source is shared by many states in the region. The potential trans-boundary effects created by the generation of nuclear power, such as those related to safety and security, should unite us towards assuring that this energy source will only be used for peaceful purposes. We trust that states of the region share these goals. The fact that several cases of gross non-compliance with international obligations undertaken in the nuclear sphere have been revealed demonstrates the need for awareness and caution in the future spread of such technologies both globally and regionally.

In our view, this complex global challenge should be addressed by the international community through the creation of clear standards which secure responsible states with the benefits of nuclear power. At the same time, these standards should aim at minimizing risks of proliferation. Towards this aim, the sensitivity of technologies and the credentials of states in the field of non-proliferation should be taken into account. Israel welcomes international initiatives in this field, and believes that the international community should build upon them.

Mr. Chairperson,

Transfers of arms to terrorists are a scourge to modern civilization. They enable groups and individuals who act in contravention and disregard to international law, to target civilians in order to further their own goals. They contribute to the destabilization of states and regions and jeopardize prospects of reaching peaceful solutions to conflicts.

Such arms transfers do not occur in vacuum. They occur when states willfully transfer arms to terrorists or when states turn a blind eye to such transfers taking place on their territory. They occur when arms transfers are not dealt with in a decisive manner or when addressing this problem does not rank high in states' priorities.

In the Middle East, the summer of 2006 conflict has demonstrated the scope and severity of this problem. Long, medium and short range missiles and rockets, as well as UAVs and MANPADS, were some of the sophisticated weapons held by the Hizbullah terror organization. These weapons were transferred to the Hizbullah by Iran and Syria. These transfers continue uninterrupted, despite Security Council Resolution 1701, as was also confirmed by the report of the Secretary General, S/2007/392, which states: "It is widely believed in Lebanon, including by the Government, that the strengthening of Fatah-Intifadah and PFLP-GC outposts could not have taken place without the tacit knowledge and support of the Syrian Government. The Prime Minister of Lebanon has recently stated publicly that these outposts have been reinforced with munitions, arms, and fighters by the Syrian Arab Republic... The Syrian Arab Republic, other regional States and the Islamic Republic of Iran have a particular responsibility to ensure that the provisions of resolution 1701 (2006) related to the arms embargo are fully respected."

On Israel's southern border, the transfers of arms from the Sinai desert to the Gaza Strip have increased alarmingly over the past year. A clearer, more decisive, action by Egypt against such transfers from its territory to the Gaza Strip is required.

However, the Middle East is not the only region afflicted by this illness. It is a disease affecting different regions around the world. It should be treated in a comprehensive manner in order to avoid the creation of further conflicts, internal and regional instability and above all harm to civilian populations. Israel has submitted this year a working paper in the CD pertaining to this issue and intends to continue the elaboration of this topic during the next work year.

Mr. Chairperson,

Israel wishes to congratulate the Canadian initiative to promote discussions on Small Arms Light Weapons (SALW), in support of The United Nations Programme of Action. As stated earlier, Israel's main concern in this context relates to the illegal and irresponsible transfers of such weapons to terrorists. In this respect, Israel would also like to state its support to the draft resolution advanced by Australia on the issue of the regulation and control of transfers of man-portable air defence systems (MANPADS).

Israel believes that the illicit brokering in Small Arms Light Weapons (SALW) constitutes a great threat to stability over the world, especially in cases where United Nations Security Council resolutions are violated. We would like to take this opportunity to congratulate the chair of the Group of Experts, Mr. Daniel Prince, for his fine work as well for the final report, which we feel will enhance the international efforts in this regard.

Thank you, Mr. Chairperson.