



NORWAY

**United Nations General Assembly
62nd Session
First Committee**

**General debate on all disarmament
and international security agenda items**

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STATEMENT

By

**Mr. Kåre Aas
Director General**

New York, 8 October 2007

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Chairperson,

Let me first of all congratulate you on assuming this important task and to assure you of my delegation's constructive support in the weeks ahead. I would also like to extend a warm welcome to H. E. Ambassador Sergio Duarte in his new capacity as High Representative and head of the Office of Disarmament Affairs. Norway looks forward to working with him and his dedicated staff.

Chairperson,

As this session of the First Committee convenes, Norway maintains two overarching priorities: First, reducing nuclear dangers; second, reducing the suffering inflicted by illicit or inhumane conventional weapons.

If we are to reduce nuclear dangers, we must find common ground on both non-proliferation and disarmament.

We must curb the spread of nuclear weapons.

We must shrink the numbers and the roles of nuclear arsenals in national security strategies.

We must ensure that an expansion of nuclear energy is not at the expense of the non-proliferation regime and international peace and security.

We must accept that reducing nuclear dangers entails responsibilities for all states.

If we are to reduce suffering inflicted by certain conventional weapons, we must reconcile legitimate sovereignty and security concerns with humanitarian concerns. We must do both.

Chairperson,

My government's specific positions on most of the issues to be discussed in this year's First Committee will be outlined during the thematic debates next week. Allow me now to focus on some central aspects of the two priorities I have mentioned.

First, we must not abandon a comprehensive nuclear disarmament agenda. My government welcomes ongoing reductions in nuclear arsenals. We hope and

expect that the START-treaty will be strengthened following its expiration in 2009, and the same should be said for the SORT-treaty due to expire in 2012.

But reductions alone, welcome as they are, do not fulfil the vision of a world free of nuclear weapons shared by so many of us.

We urge nuclear-weapon states to consider a higher degree of de-alerting, extended space between weapons and means of delivery, and legal bans on both nuclear testing and the production of weapon-grade fissile material.

At the same time, non-nuclear weapon states can not and must not be mere observers or demandeurs. Norway, for its part, provides considerable funding for the dismantlement of nuclear submarines and for securing nuclear and radioactive materials.

Non-nuclear weapon states can make other important contributions, such as ratifying the IAEA Additional Protocol, in addressing regional security concerns, and in working with nuclear-weapon states to promote transparency, non-nuclear weapon states can facilitate progress toward nuclear disarmament.

Second, we must be vigilant against terrorists who would use weapons of mass destruction to harm and kill innocent civilians.

Preventing an act of nuclear terrorism, in particular, has correctly become a top global priority. My government has focused on minimizing the use of highly enriched uranium (HEU) in the civilian sector.

Again, a variety of preventive measures are imperative, from ratifying and adhering to a range of international conventions and Security Council resolutions, to capacity building and combating the illicit trade in nuclear materials. The bottom line is that preventing nuclear terrorism requires broad and sustained international cooperation.

Third, we must move toward cooperative international arrangements for the reliable supply of nuclear fuel. The right to peaceful use of nuclear technology can be realised without establishing facilities for a fuel production.

The challenge is to develop a secure, predictable, reliable and affordable system for supply of nuclear fuel. We fully support the efforts of the IAEA as we consider this issue of utmost strategic and economic importance. Its consequences for non-proliferation and disarmament can not be overstated.

Fourth, and particularly under a most welcome African chairmanship, we must own up to our responsibility to protect innocent civilians from the illicit and inhumane conventional weapons.

My government hopes that all stakeholders will be active in reaching a prohibition of cluster munitions, which inflict unacceptable human suffering. I would also reiterate Norway's support for establishing a legally binding Arms Trade Treaty. We are prepared to contribute actively to the work of the Group of Governmental Experts to explore relevant issues.

Chairperson,

Last year, in this very committee the nuclear test carried out by the Democratic People's Republic of Korea was condemned. This year, we all welcome the real prospect of a de-nuclearized Korean Peninsula. This demonstrates what diplomacy at its best can achieve.

Today, key outstanding questions about Iran's nuclear activities remain unanswered. We face new tensions over the deployment of missile defences. The question of a possible civilian nuclear cooperation with non-state parties to the NPT is also controversial.

My government firmly believes in the potential of informed and committed diplomacy to resolve even these most challenging of problems. In this respect the UN has a crucial role to play. We welcome the new High Representative for Disarmament.

Chairperson,

This committee is intended to address issues of global concern. Yet in recent years, we have struggled to achieve a common understanding of the threats and challenges we face.

While there are genuine differences in perceptions of urgency and priority, these are too often exacerbated by divisive, rigid and zero-sum approaches.

There is an urgent need to restoring international consensus in order to move the international disarmament and non-proliferation agenda forward.

This is at least in part why Norway approached six other nations, all from different regional groupings, to try to redress the failures of the NPT Review Conference in 2005.

The Seven Nation Initiative managed to establish consensus on a number of important disarmament and non-proliferation issues, and members continue to work informally to facilitate a broader consensus.

My government also has invited prominent researchers and other members of civil society in a variety of countries to contribute in our efforts.

We believe that persistent and well-informed partnership including government and civil society is essential to address the complex challenges before us – just as such a partnership was instrumental in successfully negotiating the Mine Ban Convention 10 years ago.

Finally Chairperson,

Norway remains, as ever, committed to a constructive dialogue under your leadership.

Thank you.