



The Permanent Mission of Iceland to the United Nations

**Statement by
Ambassador Hjalmar W. Hannesson
Permanent Representative of Iceland
to the United Nations**

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Iceland

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**The Permanent Mission of Iceland to the United Nations
800 Third Ave. 36th fl. - Tel 212-593-2700. - Fax 212-593-6269**

First of all, Mr. Chairman, may I congratulate you on your election as chair of the First Committee. My tributes also go to the other Members of the Bureau.

Disarmament and non-proliferation in all their aspects are core functions of the United Nations. Weapons of mass destruction, especially nuclear weapons, have always been a primary concern to the Member States. Conventional weapons, especially small arms, light weapons, landmines and cluster bombs, also pose significant threats to the security and well-being of millions, due to their widespread existence and use.

Even though progress has been slow in recent years in the area of disarmament and non-proliferation, this does not mean that we should be complacent. Rather we should redouble our efforts to achieve better results in implementing and strengthening existing agreements and negotiating new agreements in this area.

The entry into force of the Comprehensive Nuclear Test Ban Treaty is crucial in halting and reversing the reliance on weapons of mass destruction. Although the Treaty has been signed by 177 States and ratified by 140, we still need 10 more ratifications from specific countries for the Treaty to take effect. We once more encourage states that have not yet done so to ratify the Treaty.

The Non-Proliferation Treaty (NPT) has played a central role in global efforts to prevent the spread of nuclear weapons. The 2005 NPT Review Conference that was intended to enhance the effectiveness of the Treaty ended in a disappointing outcome. Recent nuclear tests, the last one conducted only last year, as well as nuclear proliferation initiatives, are a sad reminder of non-compliance with international obligations, including IAEA safeguard agreements.

Despite the aforementioned situation, positive achievements in this area must not be forgotten. Progress in the six-party talks regarding the de-nuclearization of the Korean peninsula and the decision last week that the nuclear reactor at Yongbyon will be shut down before the end of the year are reassuring. The negotiated arrangement concerning the Islamic Republic of Iran with the IAEA shows promise and, together with diplomatic efforts, will hopefully lead to the intended outcome.

The status of implementation of the Chemical Weapons Convention, with 182 States Members, is welcome news. The High-Level Conference convened on September 27 here in New York recalled that over one-third of the world's declared chemical weapons stockpiles have already been destroyed. This further shows the importance of collective and concerted efforts by Member States. We would like to thank the Netherlands and Poland for hosting the event.

We welcome the recent establishment of the Implementation Support Unit for the Biological and Toxin Weapons Convention (BTWC) in Geneva and look forward to further work on strengthening this important Convention.

Iceland is committed to an effective implementation of the UN Programme of Action to Prevent, Combat and Eradicate the Illicit Trade in Small Arms and Light Weapons in All Its Aspects. Furthermore, the new process for an arms trade treaty (ATT) launched last year by the General Assembly may prove to be an important step towards the control of import, export and transfers of conventional weapons.

The need to revitalize the disarmament and non-proliferation agenda is clear. To that effect a stronger and more focused effort by all Member States is needed. Iceland is therefore grateful to the Secretary-General, Ban Ki-moon, for having put non-proliferation and revitalization in the field of disarmament high on his agenda. Iceland remains hopeful that the establishment earlier this year of the new Office for Disarmament and the new position of High Representative for Disarmament Affairs will strengthen the disarmament and non-proliferation machinery. We congratulate Mr. Sergio Duarte on his appointment to this position and wish him success in his work.

Our failures in the field of disarmament, non-proliferation and arms control pose a constant threat to peace and security. A revitalization in this field is long overdue, now is the time to renew our efforts. Iceland, belonging to a group of some 24 Member States of the United Nations that have abolished their armies or never had their own military, encourages all Member States to do their share.

Thank you.