



NORWAY

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STATEMENT

By

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Mr. Chair,

Over the past year, we have seen certain disarmament developments that give reason for cautious optimism. We have seen tangible results in one area, and progress in several others. That gives us much-needed hope – for this year’s session of the First Committee, and for the future of the disarmament agenda.

Norway applauds the landmark decision in the field of humanitarian disarmament that was reached in Dublin on 30 May this year, when 107 states adopted the text of the Cluster Munitions Convention.

The new convention prohibits all use, stockpiling, production and transfer of cluster munitions. It also deals with assistance to victims, clearance of contaminated areas and destruction of stockpiles.

The Convention is the outcome of the Oslo process, an open process that was launched in 2006. It has included states, civil society, the International Committee of the Red Cross and the UN. The Convention is also an expression of cross-regional partnerships with affected countries and stockpilers. We have achieved a result that is a significant strengthening of International Humanitarian Law. The Cluster Munitions Convention has established a new international norm. The Cluster Munitions Convention will be signed in Oslo on 3 December. All UN Member States have been invited to the Oslo Signing Conference.

The new Convention and the Mine Ban Convention clearly demonstrate that multilateralism can work – make a significant difference on the ground.

These lessons should inspire us further, as we address the serious humanitarian impact of the illicit trade in small arms. Norway reiterates its support for early negotiations on a forward-looking Arms Trade Treaty, taking into account principles of international humanitarian law and human rights.

Mr. Chair,

All Member States share the responsibility for moving the arms control agenda forward. I would like to outline briefly Norway’s efforts over the past year.

In a white paper submitted to the Norwegian Parliament in May, the Government identified three main objectives for its disarmament and non-proliferation efforts.

First, we are working to secure a world free of nuclear and other weapons of mass destruction. Second, we are seeking to ensure security and stability at the lowest possible level of armament through agreements that are binding under international law. Third, we are working to eliminate conventional weapons that cause unacceptable human suffering.

The white paper re-affirms the Norwegian objective of achieving a world free of weapons of mass destruction. The use of biological and chemical agents as weapons is already banned under international law. Norway is still seeking to strengthen the BTWC and the CWC, but is pleased to note that the overall picture is positive. The Second Review Conference of the CWC reached a successful conclusion. Within the BTWC, States Parties are moving forward in a pragmatic and constructive way.

On the other hand, the goal of a nuclear weapons-free world remains only a distant vision. It is vital to foster new partnerships in order to achieve our long-term goal of eliminating nuclear arms.

We recognise that this will require an incremental approach, and that we will only achieve tangible results if we mobilise political support at the highest level and engage all relevant stakeholders. That was the main message from “Achieving the Vision of a World Free of Nuclear Weapons”, an international conference held in Oslo in February this year and attended by leading experts from around the globe.

There is growing consensus that the existence of tens of thousands of nuclear weapons does not enhance our security. This can only be achieved by removing and irreversibly destroying these weapons. Nuclear disarmament is thus an integral part of our common non-proliferation efforts.

The entry into force of the Nuclear Test Ban Treaty, so that it becomes legally binding, is a key step. But a comprehensive nuclear disarmament and non-proliferation agenda must include other steps too.

We need new and deeper cuts beyond those provided for in existing arms control treaties such as START and SORT.

We need to negotiate and agree on a legally binding ban on the production of fissile material for weapons purposes.

We must deal with the problem of existing stocks of fissile material.

We need to explore ways of reducing the importance of nuclear arms in security policy through regional nuclear weapons-free zones.

We need to reduce the operational status of the nuclear weapons that are deployed.

Progress in nuclear disarmament will greatly facilitate our non-proliferation efforts. At the same time, it is evident that we will not be able to eliminate nuclear weapons completely unless we have a watertight non-proliferation regime in place.

Mr. Chair,

It is therefore deeply disturbing that parts of the multilateral machinery are still paralysed. It is not acceptable that nothing has come out of the Conference on Disarmament for more than ten years. If the CD continues not to deliver, we should ask ourselves whether this institution in its existing format serves our interests. We should ask the same question about the UN Disarmament Commission.

Standstill will lead to marginalisation and irrelevance. To maintain credibility, we need to move forward – even if progress is slow. This session of the First Committee should in Norway’s view have two objectives: to build consensus on the need for the multilateral disarmament machinery to produce results, and to foster a common understanding of how existing and new security threats should be addressed. We look forward to working with all of you to make this happen.

Thank you.