

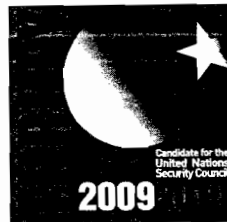


PERMANENT MISSION OF TURKEY TO THE UNITED NATIONS

**STATEMENT BY MR. FAZLI ÇORMAN,
DEPUTY PERMANENT REPRESENTATIVE OF THE
TURKISH PERMANENT MISSION TO THE UNITED NATIONS,
AT THE GENERAL DEBATE OF THE FIRST COMMITTEE**

63rd SESSION OF THE UN GENERAL ASSEMBLY

NEW YORK, 9 OCTOBER 2008



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Mr. Chairman,

I would like to begin by joining the previous speakers in congratulating you and the other members of the bureau on your well-deserved election. We are confident that your leadership and experience will steer the work of the First Committee to a successful outcome. You can count on our support during the course of deliberations.

Mr. Chairman,

Turkey favors global, overall disarmament and supports all efforts towards increased international security and stability through arms control, non-proliferation and disarmament. Turkey is a party to all major international non-proliferation instruments and export control regimes and wishes to see the universalization, effective and coordinated implementation and further strengthening of these measures. We therefore firmly support the revitalization of the international disarmament agenda through coordinated efforts in which the United Nations should play a more effective role.

At the heart of these measures lies the Non-Proliferation Treaty (NPT), which Turkey regards as the cornerstone of the nuclear non-proliferation and disarmament regime. We are committed to the full implementation of the NPT in all its three mutually-reinforcing pillars; namely, non-proliferation, disarmament and peaceful uses of nuclear energy. Universalization of the Treaty, strengthening of the safeguards system of the International Atomic Energy Agency, reinforcement of export controls and early entry into force of the Comprehensive Test-Ban Treaty are the essential contours for the sustainability of the NPT regime in the long run. We support the Decisions and the Resolution adopted by the 1995 NPT Review and Extension Conference and the Final Document of the 2000 NPT Review Conference. We are dedicated to the full compliance with the NPT regime, including the Comprehensive Safeguards Agreements and the Additional Protocols, and will continue working constructively towards a substantive outcome of the 2010 NPT Review Conference. Turkey will also actively contribute to the work of the International Atomic Energy Agency during its present tenure in the Agency's Board of Governors.

Turkey also welcomes the establishment of nuclear-free zones, freely arrived at by the countries of various regions. In this context, we support in principle the establishment of an effectively verifiable zone, free of weapons of mass destruction and their means of delivery in the Middle East.

Turkey also supports the efforts aimed at helping the Conference on Disarmament to resume its negotiating role as the world's single multilateral disarmament forum. As one of the 2008 Presidents of the Conference, Turkey believes that the Conference on Disarmament has a major role on nuclear issues, on a fissile material cut-off treaty, as well as parallel advances on negative security assurances and prevention of arms race in outer space. We regard the proposal concerning a programme of work for the Conference on Disarmament (CD/1840) as a good means to resume its negotiating role.

Mr. Chairman,

We attach great importance to alleviation, through peaceful means and as soon as possible, the ongoing crisis regarding the scope and nature of Iran's nuclear programs. We share the continuing concern of the International Atomic Energy Agency. Turkey encourages Iran to implement all measures required to build confidence in the exclusively peaceful nature of its nuclear program at the earliest possible date, as called for the relevant UN Security Council resolutions. Turkey will continue supporting and facilitating the diplomatic process for resolving the Iranian nuclear issue.

The denuclearization of the Korean peninsula remains a regional and global priority. We consider the Agreement of 13 February as an important step towards achieving the goal of complete, verifiable and irreversible denuclearization of the Korean peninsula. Turkey hopes that conditions can be created for the Democratic People's Republic of Korea to return to the Non-Proliferation Treaty at the earliest possible date and for the resumption by the International Atomic Energy Agency of comprehensive safeguards.

Mr. Chairman,

We consider the Chemical Weapons Convention and the Biological and Toxin Weapons Convention as two important components of the global system against proliferation of weapons of mass destruction. Turkey does not possess any such weapons and reiterates its call for a wider adherence to, and an effective implementation of, these Conventions. In particular, we support the efforts to promote the universality of these instruments in the Mediterranean Basin, the Middle East and the adjacent regions. In this vein, we will host a seminar, in cooperation with the Technical Secretariat of the Organisation for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons in Istanbul next spring on the universalization of the Chemical Weapons Convention.

Proliferation of the means of delivery of weapons of mass destruction is another pressing issue that needs to be effectively addressed by the international community. Indeed, Turkey is concerned with the progressive increase in the range and accuracy of ballistic missiles. Within this framework, we consider the Hague Code of Conduct against ballistic missile proliferation as a practical step towards an internationally accepted legal framework in this field. We therefore wish to see the universalization of the Hague Code of Conduct endeavour.

Proliferation of weapons of mass destruction and their means of delivery become all the more worrying in the context of terrorism. While condemning terrorism in all its forms and manifestations, we also need to remain vigilant about the risk of acquisition by terrorists of weapons of mass destruction and their delivery means. Hence, we fully support international efforts to prevent the acquisition and use by terrorists of such weapons and to enhance the safety and security of radioactive materials and sources. Utmost attention should be paid to prevent terrorists from gaining access to nuclear material and other components of these weapons. We should devise new measures to combat illicit trade in sensitive nuclear equipment and technology. In this context, we call for adherence to and effective implementation of two important conventions, namely the Convention on Suppression of Acts of Nuclear Terrorism and the Convention on the Physical Protection of Nuclear Material.

Turkey continues to support the work of the Committee established pursuant to UN Security Council Resolution 1540, which complements the international efforts against the proliferation of weapons of mass destruction. Likewise, we regard the Proliferation Security Initiative as an important scheme complementing the existing international mechanisms.

Mr. Chairman,

Proliferation of conventional weapons is also a cause of concern for Turkey. The excessive accumulation and uncontrolled spread of small arms and light weapons pose a significant threat to peace and security, as well as to the social and economic development of many countries. There is also a very close and disturbing relationship between the illicit trade in arms and terrorism. As a country suffering from terrorist attacks, Turkey will continue to actively contribute to all efforts within the UN and other fora to foster international cooperation in the fight against terrorism, including through the establishment of effective norms and rules aimed at eradicating illicit trade in small arms and light weapons in all its aspects.

Turkey remains committed to the effective implementation and further strengthening of the UN Programme of Action on Small Arms and Light Weapons and will continue to support the conclusion of an Arms Trade Treaty, which should halt unregulated and uncontrolled trade of conventional arms worldwide and establish common standards for their global trade.

We would like to express our satisfaction with the adoption of a substantive report at the Third Biennial Meeting of the States Parties to review the Programme of Action that took place in New York from 14 to 18 July 2008. We attach importance to the implementation of the recommendations and the establishment of a follow-up mechanism to the Program.

Another worrying issue in the field of conventional weapons is the scourge of indiscriminate and inhumane weapons called Anti-Personnel Land Mines. As a party to the Ottawa Convention since 2004, Turkey fully supports the efforts for the universalization and effective implementation of the Ottawa Convention and the vision of a world, free from anti-personnel mines. We continue to pursue the destruction process of the stockpiled anti-personnel land mines with utmost care and the Turkish Munitions Disposal Facility presently operates with maximum possible capacity. Let me take this opportunity to appeal to the States which have not yet done so to accede to the Convention.

In this connection, we would also like to emphasize that, since the rights and obligations enshrined in the Ottawa Convention apply only to the State Parties, the consent of the relevant State Parties is necessary if and when engagement with armed non-State actors is contemplated within the context of the Convention. Such activities should in no way serve the purposes of terrorist organizations.

We would also like to comment on the draft Convention on Cluster Munitions which is to be opened up for signature in Oslo this December. Turkey has been involved in the Oslo process, and is also an active participant of the ongoing work in the Governmental Experts Group on Cluster Munitions meetings held in Geneva within the context of the Certain Conventional Weapons. We share the humanitarian concern behind the international efforts to limit the use of cluster munitions. Welcoming the draft Oslo text, we expect the Governmental Experts Group to intensify its efforts for a document which is not identical, but rather complementary to the Oslo document.

Turkey also highly values and supports the role of the UN regional disarmament centers. We believe that these centers are instrumental in promoting the implementation of existing international disarmament and arms control norms at regional and sub-regional levels. We commend and support, including financially, the activities carried out by these centers which encourage regional dialogue for furthering openness, transparency and confidence building.

My intervention would not be complete without mentioning our support to the UN Register of Conventional Arms and the Standardized Instrument for Reporting Military Expenditures. Turkey regularly provides data to this useful mechanism which complement our work in this field.

Mr. Chairman,

Like many other countries, Turkey is concerned with the deteriorating situation in the field of disarmament and international security in recent years. We therefore would like to add our voice to those Delegations that have appealed for increased flexibility and political will that is necessary to make progress in this area, particularly in the field of nuclear disarmament and non-proliferation.

That said, I would like to conclude by emphasizing once again the full support, cooperation and flexibility of my Delegation to this end.

Thank you.