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STATEMENT

On behalf of the European Union

by

**H.E. Mr. Magnus Hellgren
Ambassador**

**at the General Debate
in the General Assembly First Committee**

**United Nations
New York**

5 October 2009

- CHECK AGAINST DELIVERY -

Mr Chairman,

1. I speak on behalf of the European Union .The Candidate Country the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia^{*}, the Countries of the Stabilisation and Association Process and potential candidates Albania and Montenegro and the EFTA country Liechtenstein, as well as Ukraine and the Republic of Moldova align themselves with this statement.

2. The European Union warmly welcomes the renewed momentum in global arms control and disarmament. Non-proliferation, disarmament and arms control, together with confidence, transparency and reciprocity, are vital aspects of collective security. We continue to stress the need for general disarmament and recall the concrete and realistic disarmament initiatives, endorsed by our 27 Heads of State and Government, which we submitted to the UN General Assembly in 2008. At the same time, we continue to be faced with major proliferation challenges. At this crucial juncture, a combined effort by the international community is necessary to strengthen disarmament, arms control and non-proliferation, which are joint security interests for all.

3. The European Union is deeply committed to strengthening the multilateral system. International organisations, regimes and treaties should be at the heart of our common efforts to confront threats to international peace and security and to ensure compliance with international obligations. Strengthening the authority of the United Nations and the legally binding treaty regimes should be a priority for all countries. The Security Council has a crucial role, that should be strengthened, in addressing cases of non-compliance threatening international peace and security.

4. The work we do in this Committee and our ability to interact with other relevant United Nations bodies are of the utmost importance. The European Union welcomes the important resolution 1887 adopted by the Security Council on 24 September during the Summit on nuclear non-proliferation and nuclear disarmament.

5. We also welcome, as a very positive development, the decision in 2009 of the Conference on Disarmament finally, after 12 years of stalemate, to agree a Programme of Work. The EU regrets that the implementation of this Programme of Work could not start in 2009, but we expect all CD Member States to renew the consensus and launch substantive work without further delay when the CD resumes its session in 2010.

6. The European Union is deeply concerned over the challenges and threats to global and regional security posed by the continued proliferation of weapons of mass destruction and their means of delivery. The risk of such weapons falling into the hands of non-State actors, in particular terrorists, exacerbates our concerns further.

7. The European Union is determined to pursue its action against the proliferation of weapons of mass destruction, which is potentially the greatest threat to our common security. The EU is committed to act with resolve, using all instruments and policies at its

^{*} The former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia continues to be part of the Stabilisation and Association Process

disposal, to prevent, deter, halt and if possible eliminate proliferation programs. We are determined to strengthen the international non-proliferation regime, achieve universal adherence to the multilateral treaties in this field and to ensure full compliance with all their obligations.

8. The capacity of the international community to ensure full compliance is dependant on our ability to detect violations. Existing verification instruments should be fully used. Additional and strengthened mechanisms should be developed where needed.

Mr Chairman,

9. The NPT, based on its three mutually reinforcing pillars of non-proliferation, disarmament and the peaceful use of nuclear energy, represents a unique and irreplaceable framework for maintaining and strengthening international peace, security and stability. In light of the current challenges in the field of international security, in particular the risk of proliferation, the European Union is convinced that the NPT is more important than ever.

10. The European Union will continue to actively work for a successful outcome of the 2010 NPT Review Conference. At the third session of its Preparatory Committee in May this year, the EU tabled a set of forward looking proposals on all three pillars of the NPT, to be part of an action plan adopted by the Review Conference. We seek a meaningful outcome of the Review Conference that strengthens the international nuclear non-proliferation regime, promotes the international consensus underlying the Treaty and sets ambitious but realistic goals in all of its three pillars, within a balanced approach. We must seize the opportunity of the 2010 Review Conference to move forward toward a safer world, one in which it is possible to meet all the objectives enshrined in the NPT, whether they be disarmament, non-proliferation or the peaceful uses of nuclear energy.

11. The year 2009 has continued to present major proliferation challenges to the NPT. We shall continue to pursue resolute action in response to them. The DPRK has conducted another nuclear test explosion, which we have strongly condemned. We call on all States to promptly implement UN Security Council resolution 1874. We are also seriously concerned by Iran's continued failure to meet its international obligations. The construction of a covert uranium enrichment facility in Qom underlines the importance of Iran reassuring the international community of the exclusively peaceful nature of its nuclear programme. We urge Iran to follow up the meeting in Geneva on 1 October with concrete measures, including giving full transparency on the Qom project. In this context, we note the agreement between the IAEA and Iran which will allow for access to the enrichment facility. We urge Iran to give diplomacy a chance to succeed. The evolution of our relations with Iran will depend on it. The European Union stresses the crucial importance of full compliance without delay with all relevant Security Council resolutions.

12. There are also new opportunities. The commitment by Presidents Medvedev and Obama to negotiate before the end of the year a follow up agreement to the Strategic

Arms Reduction Treaty is warmly welcomed, as is their renewed engagement on other strategic issues related to disarmament and non-proliferation.

13. The Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty is of crucial importance to nuclear disarmament and non-proliferation. The renewed political commitments to pursue ratifications, in particular within some Annex 2 States, of the CTBT and recent progress in the build-up of its verification regime give new impetus to our efforts to achieve the earliest possible entry into force of this key treaty.

14. The EU attaches a clear priority to the negotiation in the Conference on Disarmament, of a Fissile Material Cut-off Treaty, as a means to strengthen nuclear disarmament and non-proliferation. In this respect, the CD's decision to agree a 2009 Programme of Work (CD/1864) that inter alia mandated negotiations on an FMCT, provided a further ray of hope.

15. The EU notes that a growing number of States show interest in developing civil nuclear programs aimed at addressing their long-term energy requirements and for other peaceful purposes. The EU remains committed to ensuring a responsible development of peaceful uses of nuclear energy, in the best safety, security and non-proliferation conditions, by countries wishing to develop their capacities in this field. We stress the key role played by the IAEA in this regard. The EU supports the development of multilateral approaches to the nuclear fuel cycle and appreciates ongoing initiatives in this regard. We also welcome research into proliferation-resistant technologies.

16. The European Union contributes significantly to global nuclear security efforts and welcomes, in that respect, the announced commitment by the United States to work intensively towards securing all vulnerable fissile material and its intention to host a Global summit on Nuclear Security issues next year. The EU is ready to actively contribute to the success of this Summit.

Mr Chairman,

17. Strengthening the security and viability of space activities as well as preventing outer space from becoming an area of conflict are key security priorities for the European Union. The growing number of actors and the rapid development of activities in outer space is welcome, but could also potentially pose a risk to the security of space assets. The current situation requires enhanced international space cooperation. While further multilateral legally binding commitments have been proposed, pragmatic and voluntary confidence-building and transparency measures would allow relatively rapid subscription by as many countries as possible and could bring effective security benefits in the short term. In this spirit, the European Union has proposed to the international community a draft Code of Conduct for Outer Space Activities.

18. The proliferation of missiles that could be used to deliver weapons of mass destruction is a major concern to international security. The EU fully supports the Hague Code of Conduct and the Missile Technology Control Regime. The EU also favours

examination of further multilateral steps in preventing the threat of missile proliferation and in promoting disarmament efforts in the missile field. It is in this context that the European Union last year proposed the start of consultations on a treaty banning short and intermediate range ground-to-ground missiles.

Mr Chairman,

19. The Convention on the Prohibition of Biological and Toxin Weapons is the cornerstone of international efforts to prevent biological agents from ever being developed and used as weapons. The European Union actively promotes the universalisation of and full compliance with the Treaty. We also remain committed to develop measures to verify compliance with the BTWC. The Review Conference in 2011 will be an important opportunity to further strengthen the implementation of the Treaty.

20. The Chemical Weapons Convention has an essential role to play in countering the threat of chemical weapons. The CWC is unique among disarmament and non-proliferation treaties by completely banning in a verifiable way an entire class of weapons of mass destruction. The European Union continues to promote the universalisation and full implementation of the CWC, and to support the work of the OPCW in this regard.

21. The EU continues to support the work of the 1540 Committee in fulfilling its renewed mandate, as well as initiatives such as the Proliferation Security Initiative. The EU also reaffirms its commitment to rigorous national and internationally coordinated export controls.

Mr Chairman,

22. Mindful of the harmful and destabilising effects of unregulated transfers of conventional weapons and their diversion to the illicit market, and of the humanitarian consequences of mines and cluster munitions, the EU is strongly committed to improving the international and regional responses to these threats.

23. The EU strongly supports the concept of an international Arms Trade Treaty and is actively participating in and promoting the process leading towards its realization. The EU believes that negotiations on a treaty should begin as soon as possible.

24. The EU is a major donor to mine action and supports and promotes the Ottawa Convention on Anti-Personnel Mines and its universalisation. The EU will actively contribute to a successful Review Conference later this year in Cartagena.

25. The EU remains firmly committed to preserving and developing the CCW, which constitutes an essential part of international humanitarian law.

26. The Convention on Cluster Munitions represents an important step forward in responding to the humanitarian problems caused by this type of munitions, which constitute a major concern for all EU Member States. The adoption of a meaningful

protocol on this type of munitions in the CCW framework involving all major military powers could be an important further contribution.

27. The EU fully supports the UN Programme of Action to prevent illicit trade in small arms and light weapons. The EU will continue to combat threats posed by activities related to the illicit spread of SALW.

28. Transparency in the field of conventional weapons, including through the UN Register on Conventional Arms, remains a key component for combating the uncontrolled spread of such weapons and for promoting an atmosphere of trust and security. Such an atmosphere would also be enhanced by increasing transparency in military expenditures. The EU underlines the importance of broader participation in both instruments.

Mr Chairman,

29. These are just some of the priorities of the European Union related to the wide scope of issues before this Committee. We will develop the EU position on these and additional topics further and in more detail in our statements in the cluster debates.

Thank you.

