FIFTY-SEVENTH SESSION OF THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY

FIRST COMMITTEE

Draft resolution L. 49 Rev. 1

“Measures to prevent terrorists from acquiring weapons of mass destruction”

Explanation of vote
By
H.E. Ambassador Erling Harild Nielsen
on behalf of the European Union

NEW YORK
October 25, 2002

Check against delivery
Mr. Chairman,

It is my honour on behalf of the European Union to speak on the draft resolution L.49 Rev.1 entitled «Measures to prevent terrorists from acquiring weapons of mass destruction». The countries of Central and Eastern Europe associated with the European Union – Bulgaria, Czech Republic, Estonia, Hungary, Latvia, Lithuania, Poland, Romania, Slovakia and Slovenia and the Associated countries Cyprus, Malta and Turkey, as well as the EFTA countries of the European Economic Area - Iceland and Norway align themselves with this explanation of vote.

Mr. Chairman,

The European Union has decided to support this draft resolution.

This resolution addresses a key concern. The terrorist attacks of September 11 have proved to the world that international security is indivisible. No State on its own can keep its territory or people safe from the scourge of terrorists, terrorist groups or the threat of their access to WMD. The security and the stability of the international community is being challenged, both globally and regionally, by the risks brought about by the proliferation of WMD and their means of delivery, in particular the growing risk of linkages with terrorism.

Disarmament, arms limitation and non-proliferation can make an essential contribution to the fight against terrorism. To this end there is an urgent need to promote the adoption, universalisation, full implementation and, where necessary, strengthening of multilateral treaties and other international instruments in this field. Treaties and instruments must be effectively implemented and strictly complied with.

The EU is deeply convinced that the Treaty on the Non-proliferation of nuclear weapons is and will continue to be the cornerstone of the global non-proliferation regime and the essential foundation for the pursuit of nuclear disarmament. The NPT is an essential element of first defence against terrorists acquiring WMD. We support wholeheartedly and promote the implementation of the objectives laid down in the Treaty.

We also support efforts already under way in relevant bodies and organisations, including IAEA and OPCW, to strengthen the fight against terrorists seeking to acquire WMD.

Export controls, which help prevent terrorists from acquiring WMD need to be strengthened. Likewise, the importance of international co-operation, protection and assistance against the use or the threat of use of WMD must be emphasised. In the face of these tasks we should enhance and further develop an active political dialogue, at a bilateral or multilateral level, with a view to promoting disarmament, arms limitation and non-proliferation policies also as a means of combating terrorism.

I thank you, Mr Chairman.