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

at the

General Debate of the First Committee of the
Fifty-ninth Session of the United Nations
General Assembly

New York, 7 October 2004
Mr. Chairman,

Iceland, as a member of the European Economic Area, the EEA, aligned itself with the statement delivered last Monday by Ambassador Chris Sanders of the Netherlands on behalf of the European Union. I would, however, like to add a few remarks in my own national capacity.

The First Committee has in some senses led the way in making concrete proposals to streamline and make more effective committee work in the General Assembly. I would like to express support for improving the effectiveness of the methods of work of the First Committee.

We support the idea of fewer but better studies; of fewer but more focused resolutions which we then have a realistic chance of following up; and of a system by which we decide what measures are needed, how long they should take and that we should only renew them if we consider it necessary in the light of experience. We also support the proposed thematic grouping of agenda items.

Mr Chairman,

During this general debate many speakers have expressed great concern regarding the threat posed by weapons of mass destruction and the real possibility that rogue states and terrorist groups could acquire such weapons. My government believes this is an issue of central concern for world security which must be effectively addressed by the international community.

As an island state located in the middle of some of the busiest sea lanes of the world we attach great importance to and support the Proliferation Security Initiative (PSI), whose goal is to prevent the flow of weapons of mass destruction (WMD), their delivery systems and related materials to and from states as well as non-state actors.

The Non-Proliferation Treaty is a fundamental pillar of arms control, as we have stated often, and must be preserved and strengthened. Despite no agreement in the Preparatory Committee for the 2005 NPT Review Conference we hope for a fruitful outcome.

Thank you Mr. Chairman.