Statement

by

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At the 1st Committee of the 60th Session
at the United Nations General Assembly

On

The German/Romanian Draft Resolution
"Objective Information on military matters, including transparency of military expenditures"

17 October 2005

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Mr. Chairman,

I have the pleasure to introduce the biennial resolution L. 42 entitled Objective information on military matters, including transparency of military expenditures.

I would like to take this opportunity to thank those nations who for the first time have co-sponsored our consensus resolution this year and brought up the number of co-sponsors to 70 nations so far. Let me encourage those delegations who are still considering to co-sponsor to do so.

Mr. Chairman, the draft German / Romanian biennial resolution which you have in front of you is a follow-up to the version of 2003. It encourages again - Member States that have information to provide, to submit nil returns. Thus, participation could further be increased towards the goal of universalisation.

Mr. Chairman, I appeal to all countries that have so far not yet participated to join the Instrument by submitting information next year.

Let me continue with some general remarks on the operational side of this resolution. Significant progress was recorded this year in the level of participation by Governments in the two global arms transparency instruments maintained and operated by the United Nations Secretariat - the Register of Conventional Arms and Standardised Instrument for Reporting Military Expenditures based on the respective Netherlands and Germany / Romania resolutions. Encouragingly, the number of new participants in the two arms transparency instruments continues to grow registering a significant increase over the past years.

A promising upturn and a record number of submissions by Governments has been recorded for the United Nations system for the Standardised reporting on Military Expenditures. In the year 2004 we can note 79 reports and this year, the UN Secretariat has received so far submissions from 70 Governments. I wish to mention the Governments of Bolivia, Bosnia-Herzegovina, Israel, Republic of Korea, and Solomon Islands who have participated in the United Nations system for the standardized reporting on Military Expenditures for the first time by making a submission in 2004/5. This standardized reporting format covers expenditure on personnel, operations and maintenance, procurement and construction, research and development. So far, more than 115 Governments have participated in the reporting instrument at least once, and in recent years the data provided by an increased number of participating Governments together constitute more than 80 per cent of global military expenditure.
Sustained effort is being made by the UN-Department for Disarmament Affairs to increase familiarity with the procedures of these instruments, with a view to encouraging greater and more consistent participation. A series of regional and sub regional workshops, together with the assistance of interested Governments, has been conducted in 2004 and early 2005 focussing on the signatory states of the Nairobi Declaration, covering the Horn of Africa, East Africa and the Great Lakes region as well as the States belonging to the Southern African development Community together with UN-DOA, the Netherlands, Sweden, Norway and the United Kingdom. The UN standardized instrument for reporting military expenditures was also discussed at a regional workshop covering the Member States belonging to the Pacific Islands Forum, held in Nadi, Fiji, from 18 to 20 August 2004, which was organized by the Department for Disarmament Affairs; and in a presentation by the Department in the plenary session of the Committee on Hemispheric Security of the Organization of American States, held in Washington, D.C., on 25 April 2005.

In addition to raising funds to hold workshops, the Department for Disarmament Affairs has also made efforts to promote the UN reporting instrument by publishing booklets and other activities. It has recently issued a booklet containing guidelines for making submissions to the UN reporting instrument and it has collaborated with the UN Economic Commission for Latin America and the Carribbean on a report to promote transparency of military expenditures in that region.

Though focused on Latin America, many aspects of that report are however relevant for all regions of the world. I am informed that both these publications as well as an Information Sheet containing the latest data on the UN reporting instrument have been distributed to all Member States today.

Additionally, I would like to draw your attention to the report of the Secretary General, published 25 July this year as document A/60/159, which contains information from Member states on their military expenditures. In my opinion it is worth looking at this informative document.

These efforts helped to enhance and sustain the progress of the global transparency instruments towards fulfilling their respective confidence-building and arms restraint objectives. We therefore would welcome support from other interested governments for co-sponsoring these activities to advance the objectives or arms transparency.

Also I appeal to those that have only participated once or just a few times, to participate on a consistent basis. Consistency alone will significantly raise the level of participation each year. Thereby it will contribute to the common goal of transparency.

I express my hope that the resolution will again be accepted without a vote.