NORWAY

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Check against delivery

STATEMENT

By

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Mr. Chair,

Multilateral approaches to disarmament and non-proliferation are essential in developing, maintaining and further strengthening fundamental norms.

In our general statement to this committee we noted that important progress had taken place in one negotiation process, while there is standstill in others.

A landmark was achieved this year through the adoption of the Cluster Munitions Convention in Dublin this year. The convention strengthens international humanitarian law, and provides a framework for implementation.

The process towards the adoption of the Cluster Munitions Convention clearly demonstrates that multilateralism works. What is required is innovative approaches, involving all relevant stakeholders, and mobilisation of the necessary political will and determination to move forward.

While recognising that other negotiating processes may be different in character, we believe that important lessons may be drawn from the humanitarian disarmament approach.

Mr. Chair,

Let me address some areas which are still plagued by standstill, and run the risk of being marginalised.

The Conference on Disarmament certainly belongs to this category. As long as there is no consensus on a programme of work, the CD cannot move on negotiations on a much needed FMCT. Norway urges CD member states, especially those which have not yet joined consensus on a programme of work, to demonstrate flexibility and allow the CD to what the Conference is intended to do. Again, negotiations are not the same as consenting to a specific outcome.

It should also be borne in mind that the CD is not an end in itself. If this body remains paralysed, there will be stronger calls for considering other avenues in order to move the disarmament process forward.

Another body that is not performing as well as it should is the UN Disarmament Commission (UNDC). Also this year we witnessed that the UNDC could not agree on any substantive recommendations. The Commission is intended to be a deliberative body. Yet, few countries find it useful enough to send expert from their capitals or Geneva to the UNDC session.
If we are to maintain this institution, we should engage in an honest debate on its working methods. The UNDC has to provide an added value. At this stage let me flag some preliminary suggestions such as a shorter UNDC session, with a focus on one or two clearly defined topics by the UN General Assembly. The report from the Commission does not necessarily have to be a negotiated document. A Chair’s summary should suffice. The UNDC is, after all, a deliberative body. We hope that the next UNDC session will engage in profound self evaluation.

Mr. Chair,

It has been affirmed that profound reforms can only take place within the framework of a possible fourth special session of the UN General Assembly on disarmament (SSOD IV). Norway would be more than pleased if there had been consensus on the modalities and format of such a conference, which could ignite a new momentum in multilateralism. To this end Norway has previously provided financial support to enhanced consultations on SSOD IV. On the other hand, we would run a considerable risk to call for a SSOD IV, if such a conference could fail. An SSOD IV would have to be well-prepared.

In the anticipation of an SSOD IV, we should seek to make improvements in the functioning of the multilateral machinery where possible. One area is of course the functioning of the First Committee. Given its universal nature, we consider this body of the UN General Assembly fundamental in advancing the cause of disarmament and non-proliferation.

We have seen progress in the way the First Committee works, but more needs to be done. This year we will take action on 58 resolutions and decisions. Some of them are repetitive. We reiterate our view that when a resolution has been adopted it will stand unless otherwise decided. To the extent possible my delegation hopes that we can get the number of repetitive resolutions down.

In every session we notice that tremendous efforts are put into mobilising co-sponsorship. We should ask ourselves whether aiming for the highest possible number of co-sponsors is the best way to make use of the four weeks available. Lastly, we should continue efforts to enhance the engagement of the civil society in the work of the First Committee. Although NGOs do not always agree with our positions on certain resolution, we greatly value their active engagement.