STATEMENT
By
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At the
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UN General Assembly First Committee

United Nations
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Mr. Chairman,

Let me congratulate you on the election as the Chair of the First Committee of the 67th UNGA and the members of the Bureau. I assure you, Ambassador Percaya of our full support and wish you a lot of success in arriving to a desired outcome.

The Republic of Macedonia aligns itself with the statement made by the European Union. However, I would like to present some additional observations in my national capacity.

Mr. Chairman,

Achieving progress in the disarmament of conventional weapons is of particular interest to my country. The statistic confirms that these weapons are among the deadliest ones, causing far more casualties than any other weapons due to the large scope of their use.

The control of the spread of conventional weapons, in particular of SALW, as well as preventing their divergence into illicit trade are issues that directly affect the stability of countries in our region but also worldwide. For those reasons the Republic of Macedonia has been supporting the implementation of the United Nations Programme of Action to prevent, combat and eradicate the illicit trade in SALW, since its inception and is further committed to its strengthening at national and international levels. Through the actions taken within the Programme we have been able to increase the security at home and beyond. By cooperating closely with our neighbors and the wider international community, on this and on other disarmament issues, we have contributed to enhancing the stability, good-neighbourliness and development in South Eastern Europe. In this context, I would like to highlight that the human security i.e. the people centered approach remains central to the Macedonian policy and action on SALW, enhancing safety of the individuals affected by SALW. Among the few achievements made on the domestic front last year let me mention: the elaboration and adoption of the Law on examination and marking of weapons and ammunition; the adoption of a new Law on International Restrictive Measures the upgrade of the weapons registration and management software; implementation of a ballistic identification system (IBIS); strengthening the implementation of the border management strategy and increased cooperation with the civil sector, especially in the revision of the Law on weapons and in awareness raising events.

At this point I would also like to express Macedonia’s satisfaction for the consensual outcome of the recent Small Arms and Light Weapons Review Conference and, as many other delegations did, to extend our congratulation to Ambassador Joy Ogwu of Nigeria for the skillful chairing of the Conference. Macedonia will remain committed to the effective implementation and further strengthening of the UNPOA.
Mr. Chairman,

The Republic of Macedonia is a strong supporter of the adoption of a legally binding instrument to regulate the arms trade. Being located in the region where over the last decade of the 20th century the uncontrolled spread of conventional weapons, in particular SALW, fueled or exacerbated conflicts and had devastating humanitarian consequences, we understand the consequences of further delaying the adoption of ATT. Macedonia shares the disappointments expressed by other delegations that the Conference convened on 2-27 July 2012 was unable to conclude its work. We should not stop there, but rather step up our work and continue on the basis of the Chairman’s text of 26 July 2012. In this regard we support the draft-resolution submitted by a group of countries for the early continuation and convening of the Final UN Conference on the Arms Trade Treaty to complete the unfinished work on the Treaty.

Mr. Chairman,

The protection of civilians has been at the core of the UN engagements and the Convention on Cluster Munitions is considered as an instrument that greatly embodies this aim. We note with satisfaction that the number of ratifications has grown to 75. At the Third Meeting of State parties which recently took place in Oslo, the Republic of Macedonia provided information on the status of the implementation of the Convention and reiterated our firm commitment to finalize the destruction of the remaining stockpiles of cluster munitions. Let me take this opportunity and once again extend thanks to our international partners, the Government of Germany and the Norwegian People’s Aid, with whom we closely cooperate to meet this objective by the next inter-sessional meeting in April 2013.

Macedonia supports international efforts for the universalisation of the international instruments banning WMD. This year has marked the 15th anniversary of the Chemical Weapons Convention. The meeting on 1 October 2012 has renewed calls to Member States who have not acceded to CWC to do so without delay. Let us hope that by the Third CWC Review Conference in April 2013, we’ll be able to note some progress in this regard.

We are eager to see progress related to the universalisation of the NPT and in the implementation of the outcome of the NPT Review Conference in May 2010 in all three pillars of the Treaty. We support the strengthening of the international nuclear non-proliferation regime and establishing of a nuclear weapon and other weapons of mass distraction free zones in several parts of the world. These zones can contribute to the regional and global stability and this is particularly relevant for the Middle East. Macedonia hopes that the forthcoming Conference in Finland on the creation of the WMDFZ in the Middle East can provide a desired outcome.

While recognizing the recent ratification of the CTBT by the Central African Republic, Trinidad and Tobago, Ghana, Guinea, Guatemala and Indonesia, its entry into force remains crucial for the nuclear disarmament and non-
proliferation. Macedonian Minister Nikola Poposki joined other Ministers calling for the early entry into force of the CTBT in the Joint Statement issued at the CTBT Ministerial Meeting, held on 27 September 2012.

Macedonia made a lot in building its legislative, institutional and administrative capacities to prevent proliferation of WMD in accordance with the UNSC Resolution 1540. In this regard, let me inform you that since 2011 the Republic of Macedonia takes an active part in the EU Instrument for Stability initiative for establishment of the CBRN Centers of Excellence (CoEs) for Southeastern Europe, Ukraine, Moldova, and the Caucasus. The Republic of Macedonia has already identified its needs and submitted project proposals for improvement in several areas. Following a decision by the Government, a National CBRN coordination body was established on June 19, 2012, consisting of representatives of all competent authorities.

Mr. Chairman,

In conclusion let me stress that present threats to the international security demand to have even more functional and efficient disarmament machinery. Unfortunately, that is not the case. The reasons for such situation are complex, but at the same time they don’t represent insurmountable impediments. We should explore all the avenues and mobilize more political will to make some headway at this session. Through these lances we look at the initiatives to expand the membership of the Conference on disarmament and to make progress on the negotiation on the FMCT.

Thank you for the attention.