Statement

by

Mr. András Kos
Minister Counsellor
Delegation of the European Union

UN General Assembly 70th Session
First Committee Thematic Discussion on Disarmament Machinery

United Nations, New York
Tuesday 27 October 2015

Check against delivery
I have the honour to speak on behalf of the European Union and its Member States.

The Candidate Countries the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia*, Montenegro*, Serbia* and Albania*, the country of the Stabilisation and Association Process and potential candidate Bosnia and Herzegovina, and the EFTA country Iceland, member of the European Economic Area, as well as Ukraine, the Republic of Moldova, Armenia and Georgia, align themselves with this statement.

We strongly support the United Nations and effective multilateralism. The role and contribution of the UN disarmament machinery - the components of which are mutually reinforcing - remain crucial and irreplaceable. Deliberative and negotiating bodies set up under the auspices of the First Special Session of the General Assembly devoted to Disarmament (SSOD-I) need to improve their performance and reach results in line with their agreed mandates.

As we pursue this agenda, it is essential that we continue giving urgent attention to enhancing the role, authority, effectiveness and efficiency of the General Assembly and its First Committee. Practical steps can be contemplated with a view to improving its practices and working methods and make the First Committee more effective. We believe that the Committee should serve as a forum for open and relevant exchange, able to deal with current challenges to our collective security and develop concrete measures to this end. It should concentrate its efforts on the most pertinent and topical issues. Many of the resolutions are repetitive: we should examine the possibility of considering them with longer time intervals, in a balanced manner, in order to alleviate the Committee's heavy agenda. We welcome and support the efforts of the Chair in this regard.

The Conference on Disarmament (CD), in accordance with its mandate, has the crucial role to negotiate multilateral disarmament treaties. We are concerned that yet again, it did not succeed in agreeing on a Programme of Work and commencing negotiations. While continuing to seek the path towards renewed negotiations, the re-establishment of the Informal Working Group to assist in developing a Programme of Work provided a useful opportunity to explore new avenues and we commend the Co-Chair for her efforts in this regard. The structured and substantive discussions on the four core items under the Schedule of Activities, as well as the additional sessions under the Netherlands Presidency allowed for in depth exchanges, in particular during the sessions devoted to FMCT and PAROS coordinated by Germany and the UK respectively.

We reiterate our longstanding commitment to the enlargement of the Conference. We underline the importance of continuing consultations on the expansion of its membership and strongly support to have a formal discussion on this issue as requested by the Observer States and the appointment of a special coordinator in this respect.

We welcome enhanced interaction between civil society and the CD and we hope that further steps towards broadened contribution of NGOs and research institutions, in an inclusive manner, to the work of the Conference can be taken in the future.

* The former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, Montenegro, Serbia and Albania continue to be part of the Stabilisation and Association Process.
For the European Union, the immediate commencement and early conclusion of the negotiation in the Conference on Disarmament of a Treaty banning the production of fissile material for nuclear weapons or other nuclear explosive devices, on the basis of document CD/1299 and the mandate contained therein, remains a clear priority. We call on all CD member states to start negotiations on such a Treaty without delay and to begin work on the other issues on the agenda in line with the adopted Programme of Work CD/1864. We call on all states possessing nuclear weapons that have not done so to declare and uphold an immediate moratorium on the production of fissile material for nuclear weapons or other nuclear explosive devices.

We welcome the report of the Group of Governmental Experts (GGE) on a Treaty banning the production of fissile material for nuclear weapons and other nuclear explosive devices. It reflects the views expressed and identifies areas of convergence and divergence on key aspects of a Treaty. The report should serve as a useful guidance in bringing the Conference on Disarmament closer to future negotiations on this important issue.

We recognize the important role that the UN Disarmament Commission (UNDC) is designed to play as a deliberative body of the UN General Assembly on disarmament matters, established by its First Special Session devoted to Disarmament. Regrettably, since 1999, it has not been able to fulfil its mandate and to deliver results.

This year's session marked the beginning of a new three-year cycle. We supported the need for a more focused agenda. This, in our view, could provide room for consensual recommendations and would allow the UNDC to assume once again its designated role. We also supported the expansion of its agenda which could create favourable conditions for overcoming the existing deadlock and could allow the UNDC to discuss new developments in the field of international security and disarmament.

We underline the importance of the United Nations Institute for Disarmament Research (UNIDIR) as a stand-alone, autonomous institution of the disarmament machinery. For 35 years, UNIDIR has supported the international community with independent and in-depth research on security issues and prospects for disarmament and non-proliferation. The EU and its Member States have supported its important work on numerous occasions, including financially. Today, we are strongly preoccupied by the Institution's difficulties, a solution to which will be instrumental for UNIDIR to strengthen its management and financial stability and to take forward its mandate in fulfilling Member States expectations and facilitating progress in disarmament efforts.