First Committee

Disarmament Machinery

Statement by Austria

delivered by

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Permanent Representative of Austria to the United Nations Office in Geneva

New York, 31 October 2018

Check against delivery
Chairperson,

Austria fully aligns itself with the Statement delivered by the European Union.

We deeply regret that the CD is not fulfilling its mandate as disarmament negotiating forum for 22 years. Whereas we value the efforts that were put into [substantive] deliberations in the framework of subsidiary bodies in the Conference on Disarmament this year, in our opinion this cannot replace compliance with the negotiating mandate. We commend the coordinators and most CD presidencies for their hard work and leadership. However, we must not lose sight of the fact that the CD has remained in deadlock as regards the start of negotiations on key issues of international peace and security. Breaking this deadlock should remain highest priority of CD members, particularly in the context of the current unstable security environment. Political will is required to bring the CD back to work in accordance with its mandate, which is disarmament negotiations. We continue to support revitalisation efforts, and also reiterate our call for the expansion of CD membership.

Chairperson,

We welcome that a new topic, outer space, has been included in the agenda of the UN Disarmament Commission and we hope that the Commission can reach consensus on relevant recommendations during the next cycle. We support the ongoing efforts to improve the working methods of this body.

One key factor for the functioning of the UN machinery and the related instruments is their financing. All parties should honour their financial obligations and pay their contributions in full and on time.

We welcome the new UNIDIR Director and look forward to the cooperation with her and her team. UNIDIR features an autonomous institute under the UN umbrella with highly valuable contributions in the field of disarmament research. It is important that the Institute receives the necessary financial support in a manner that provides sustainability and allows for longer-term planning. The report presented in this First Committee sessions clearly articulates that the financial basis coming from the UN budget has to be increased. Statements of support for UNIDIR’s work will sound hollow as long as we do not engage to achieve this.
UNIDIR’s project on achieving gender equality in multilateral disarmament forums, in cooperation with the International Gender Champions Initiative, is one example of the pertinent questions that UNIDIR research addresses. We clearly need more focus on concrete strategies and practical guidance how we can ensure that women are represented fully and equally in disarmament forums and that a gender perspective is incorporated in our disarmament work as a matter of principle.

As the Secretary General emphasized in his “Disarmament Agenda”, the objectives in our disarmament work are growing more diverse. We agree with his assessment that we, therefore, need to strengthen partnerships for disarmament at all levels, with international organisations, civil society and the private sector, draw in new or marginalized constituencies and mobilize public interest at the global level.

I thank you.