74th Session of the General Assembly

Item 98

L.56 entitled “Strengthening and developing the system of arms control, disarmament and non-proliferation agreements”

New York, 6 November 2019

Explanation of Vote

Mr. Chair,

I am taking the floor to explain our vote (if consensus: position) on draft resolution L.56 entitled Strengthening and developing the system of arms control, disarmament and non-proliferation treaties and agreements.

We voted yes (if consensus: supported this resolution) because we are convinced of the central importance of the rules-based international order in the preservation of international peace and security. We fully share the concern expressed in the resolution about the impact on international security of any undermining of norms and agreements in the area of arms control, disarmament and non-proliferation.

While such a resolution can be a vehicle to recommit to and express broadest possible support for our norms, instruments and regimes, we feel compelled to put on record that we see a stark contrast between the thrust of this resolution and a number of recent actions and developments.

Notably, Switzerland regrets that the Intermediate-Range Nuclear Forces Treaty (INF Treaty) of 1987 could not be preserved. The development of new cruise missiles, which raised concerns about the conformity with the INF, followed by the subsequent termination of the treaty, demonstrates the worrisome trend to withdraw from or even disregard key norms, rules or agreements.

Another key concern is the breach of the longstanding prohibition of chemical weapons, due in particular to their repeated use in Syria. In this respect, the objection to the establishment of a mechanism that serves to identify the origin of chemical weapons used as well as the responsible parties, in our view runs counter to the core considerations of resolution L.56.

Mr. Chair,

We would expect that the sponsors of L.56, and in fact all States, to show the necessary leadership in view of ensuring compliance with existing norms, decreasing tensions and preserving the rules-based order.

Thank you.