



PERMANENT MISSION
OF SWITZERLAND TO THE UNITED NATIONS

Unofficial translation

GENERAL ASSEMBLY
59th Session

First Committee

Statement

**by Ambassador Christian Faessler, Permanent Representative of
Switzerland to the Conference on Disarmament**

(General Debate)

New York, 5th October 2004

Mr. Chairman,

Let me begin by congratulating you on your appointment to the Chairmanship of our Committee and by assuring you that you can count on the full cooperation of my delegation at all times. The commitment of Mexico in the area of arms control and disarmament as well as your personal experience in multilateral diplomacy will undoubtedly prove to be significant assets in ensuring the success of our work.

Mr. Chairman,

The objective of the tasks ahead of us in the First Committee will be to meet the important challenges in the field of arms control and disarmament. Besides nuclear disarmament and non-proliferation, we should mention the problem of terrorist groups acquiring weapons of mass destruction or the challenges posed by certain conventional weapons that kill thousands every year.

As mentioned yesterday by various delegations, the First Committee is the ideal platform for international co-operation in the field of arms control and disarmament. We ought not to underestimate the importance of continuing our activity in the framework of multilateral security, based on international law and providing for effective verification measures.

Mr. Chairman,

The first task ahead aims to improve the work methods of our Committee. In this respect, my delegation supports your proposal to implement without delay certain measures to bring about practical improvements of our work taking into account the different proposals that are contained in resolution 58/136 of the UN General Assembly. In particular, we welcome your proposal to proceed with an interactive exchange of views on our work ahead and on the priorities to be determined.

Mr. Chairman,

The slow pace of disarmament reaching meaningful goals with respect to weapons of mass destruction is disheartening and we must recognise that the total elimination of these weapons remains an elusive and hard to achieve long-term goal. However, there are some measures, which can be implemented without delay that should allow us to approach this objective:

- The first and the most urgent measure is to respect existing commitments. In this vein, we note with satisfaction that Libya has abandoned its programme to acquire weapons of mass destruction. My delegation calls on Iran to respect the totality of the resolutions adopted on 18th of September by the Board of Governors of the IAEA. Furthermore, we call on the Democratic People's Republic of Korea to abandon any military nuclear programme. In this respect we support all efforts to find a diplomatic solution for the nuclear questions in the Korean peninsula.
- The second important measure is to increase our efforts to achieve the universalization of all agreements and treaties in the field of weapons of mass destruction. We call on those countries which have not yet done so to ratify without delay the Treaty on Nuclear Non-proliferation, the Comprehensive Nuclear Test Ban Treaty, the Chemical Weapons Convention and the Convention banning biological weapons.
- The third measure is to start negotiations without delay at the Conference on Disarmament on a ban of the production of fissile materials for weapons purposes. My country would like to see that all members of the Conference on Disarmament agree on the programme of work at the beginning of next year, which would allow substantive work to start on this issue.

Mr. Chairman,

The picture is less disheartening with respect to conventional weapons. Important progress has been achieved in the field of small arms and light weapons with respect to the implementation of the Programme of Action and the negotiations started this year in New York on an international instrument on marking and tracing. My colleague, Ambassador Anton Thalmann, who is chairing these negotiations, is planning to conduct consultation on the fringe during the third week of the First Committee on the 20th October.

Last November, the States Parties to Convention on certain conventional weapons, succeeded in adopting the fifth Protocol on explosive remnants of war. Our efforts to minimise the humanitarian consequences of ERW must continue and my country is presently chairing the group of military experts on ERW.

Finally, the First Review Conference of the Convention banning antipersonnel mines which will take place in Nairobi in November, will be an opportunity to welcome the important progress achieved since the entry into force of the Convention. Furthermore, it also represents an occasion to renew our commitment towards a world free of antipersonnel mines. An important goal for my country will be the universalization of the Convention and the respect of its provisions by non-state actors.

Thank you for your attention.