



CHECK AGAINST DELIVERY!

Statement by
H.E. Ms Darja Bavdaž-Kuret
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Nations
at the First Committee of the 73rd session of the UN General Assembly
New York, 15 October 2018

Mr Chairperson, Excellences, Ladies and Gentlemen,

Let me start by congratulating you, Ambassador Jinga, for assuming the role of the Chairperson of this year's First Committee meeting and wish you every success in your endeavors.

In addition to the statement delivered by the European Union, I wish to add some elements on how Slovenia sees and already implements Secretary General's *Agenda for Disarmament* and how we contribute to *Securing Our Common future*.

(Disarmament to save humanity)

In the area that SG described as *Disarmament to save humanity* we find the **proliferation of the use of chemical weapons** - in Iraq, Syria, Malaysia, as well as UK - utterly **unacceptable**. Slovenia, a strong supporter of non-proliferation, arms control and disarmament of weapons of mass destruction (WMD) believes that the use of chemical weapons, including the use of any toxic chemicals as weapons, by State or non-State actors, **represents a**



breach of international law and may amount to a war crime or a crime against humanity. It must thus be strongly condemned. The responsibility of the international community is to **allow for no impunity** and to identify and hold accountable the perpetrators of such acts.

To this end we support the work of OPCW and the implementation of the decision taken at the Special Session of the Conference of the States Parties to the Chemical Weapons Convention in June this year **on establishing the mechanism for attribution of the use of chemical weapons.** Slovenia has also **joined the International Partnership against Impunity for the use of Chemical Weapons in April this year.**

Mr Chairperson,

On the nuclear weapons we are of firm belief that we have to achieve our common goal of the **world free of nuclear weapons progressively** through the full implementation of the **Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT).** For Slovenia, the NPT remains the cornerstone of nuclear disarmament, non-proliferation and development of nuclear energy applications for peaceful purposes. We believe that the **progress has been made in all three areas** and we encourage all states to continue implementing the NPT. In our view **effective, verifiable and irreversible nuclear disarmament** requires not only appropriate technical and security conditions, but also an **active engagement of states that possess nuclear weapons.**

Slovenia will thus support resolutions focused on delivering concrete, tangible results that are related to **progressive approach to nuclear disarmament,** such as nuclear test ban (CTBT), nuclear disarmament verification, banning



the production of fissile material for nuclear weapons (FMCT), establishing and maintaining nuclear weapons free zones (NWFZ).

We commend the role of the IAEA in ensuring Iran's on-going implementation of its commitments under the **Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action (JCPoA)**, **a part of the global nuclear non-proliferation architecture that is crucial for the security of the region**. The **JCPoA** clearly shows that even the most difficult issues can be resolved by diplomatic and peaceful means. We reiterate support to JCPoA as long as Iran honours its obligations.

We welcome **developments and decisions taken at the high-level with the DPRK** and we are awaiting their **implementation**. Slovenia supports **all diplomatic efforts** aimed at achieving the **complete, verifiable and irreversible de-nuclearisation** of the Korean Peninsula. Until then we will continue to strictly enforce existing sanctions and call upon all States to continue to do so. We urge the DPRK to **comply with relevant UNSC resolutions** and call on the DPRK to **ratify the CTBT**, and thus help its entry into force, and **return to the NPT and IAEA Safeguards**.

(Disarmament that saves lives)

Mr Chairperson,

As I move forward to the part of *Agenda on Disarmament that saves lives* I wish to highlight the need for full **respect of international humanitarian law** and an obligation of all sides to refrain from use of weapons that do not distinguish combatants and civilians. Slovenia is concerned about the rising numbers of mine and cluster munitions victims.



Victim assistance represents one of the true embodiments of the spirit of the Ottawa Convention and the Convention on Cluster Munitions. **Commitment to all victims and their families** often means lifetime care. Slovenia has been active in this area also through the **ITF Enhancing Human Security**, established by the Slovenian Government to help solving humanitarian crises caused by anti-personnel mines and other unexploded remnants of war in South-Eastern Europe. Today the ITF is actively engaged in many other mine-affected regions and countries in the world, where it has, together with **other donors to whom we thank**, responded to the needs of children and adults affected by conflicts.

After learning that our **cluster munitions stockpiles**, which were sent for destruction to an implementing partner country in 2011, were not completely and irreversibly destroyed by the service provider at that time, we have worked relentlessly to **ensure complete destruction of the remaining elements of munitions**. It is a great pleasure for me to inform also in this forum that the **Slovenian stockpiles of cluster munitions were completely and irreversibly destroyed on 12 April 2018**. Thus, Slovenia has fulfilled all its obligations arising from Article 3 of the Convention before the deadline.



(Disarmament for future generations)

Let me continue on **international humanitarian law** and touch upon *Disarmament for future generations*. **New weapon technologies** raise a number of ethical, legal, moral and technical questions which need to be thoroughly elaborated and they must not jeopardize the implementation of the international humanitarian law. It is necessary to preserve the autonomy of human control over computational methods, with the possibility of human intervention in all phases of Lethal Autonomous Weapons Systems (LAWS).

(Strengthening partnerships for disarmament)

Mr Chairman,

Slovenia strongly supports the idea expressed in *Agenda for Disarmament to Strengthen partnerships for disarmament*. We have to take into account the **synergies** within UN's platforms like UNPoA SALW, ATT as well as between different organizations and fora such as the OSCE, the Wassenaar Arrangement and UNODA.

The importance of **gender dimension, in participation in all decision making processes**, needs to be recognised. The protection and promotion of women's rights is also one of our national foreign policy priorities, including within the Human Rights Council, which has been presided over by Slovenia this year. Slovenia was also one of the **initiators of the launching of the Vienna chapter of the International Gender Champions initiative** last year. Work is underway to institutionalize the initiative and recently the agreement was reached to establish the IGC Hub Steering Group in Vienna.

Mr Chairperson,



As an observer to the **Conference on Disarmament** we were pleased to follow the work of subsidiary bodies on all agenda items of the Conference and also to see that they have presented their reports. Slovenia would like to contribute to discussions on present challenges and search for solutions. We look forward to the discussions, as well as **positive decisions on expanding the CD's membership to ensure universality, transparency and multilateralism.**

Finally, Mr Chairperson, I would like to reiterate my delegation's full commitment to actively participate in the discussions and our utmost support for the work of the Committee.

Thank you, Mr Chairperson.