



SLOVENIA

CHECK AGAINST DELIVERY!

Statement by
Ms. Ondina Blokar Drobič
Deputy Permanent Representative of the Republic of Slovenia to the United Nations
at the First Committee of the 72nd session of the UN General Assembly
New York, October 10, 2017

Mr Chairman,

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

In addition to the alignment with the statement delivered by the European Union, I wish to add some elements in my national capacity.

Today, security situation in the world is challenged by unprecedented proliferation crises, recent proof being the sixth nuclear test by the Democratic People's Republic of Korea, which Slovenia strongly condemns. This was a grave violation of numerous resolutions adopted by the UN Security Council. As such, it highlights the importance of the full implementation of the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons and a speedy entry into force of the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty.

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.



The Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action clearly shows that even the most difficult issues can be resolved by diplomatic and peaceful means. Slovenia therefore counts on continued compliance with the nuclear deal by all sides and commends the IAEA for playing such an important monitoring role in the case of Iran's nuclear program.

At the 2010 NPT Review Conference we have agreed on the step-by-step Action plan with practical measures, including in the area of disarmament, to which we are all committed.

Slovenia has supported resolutions and activities focused on delivering concrete, tangible results, that are related to progressive approach to disarmament. These include nuclear test ban (CTBT), transparency in the area of ballistic missiles (HCoC), and nuclear disarmament verification, banning the production of fissile material for nuclear weapons (FMCT), decreasing the operational readiness of nuclear weapons, as well as establishing and maintaining nuclear weapons free zones (NWFZ).

We believe that significant progress has been made in all mentioned areas of disarmament and we encourage all nuclear weapon states to participate in these initiatives. 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.

Let me also point out that it is precisely because of my country's attachment to nuclear non-proliferation, peaceful uses of the atomic energy, and disarmament that we devoted a panel discussion to global nuclear governance at this year's Bled Strategic Forum.

With regard to other weapons of mass destruction, I would like to reiterate our strong condemnation of all use of chemical weapons, especially the confirmed use of them in Syria. Slovenia supports the work and extension of mandate of Joint Investigative Mechanisms (JIM), as well as the work of Organization for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons (OPCW), its Fact Finding Mission (FFM) and Declaration Assessment Team (DAT), and calls for allowing them unconditioned access to all relevant areas.

On the positive note we would like to welcome the completion of the verified destruction of Russia's remaining declared chemical weapons stockpiles. This is indeed a significant step to delivering a world free from chemical weapons.



Let me continue by reiterating our strong concern about the rising numbers of mine and cluster munitions victims. Slovenia has always attached great importance to victim assistance. For us, victim assistance always represented 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. We need to ensure their social and economic reintegration and full participation in all spheres of the society on an equal basis and in a sustainable way.

Slovenia has been active in the area of mine and cluster munitions victim assistance also through the International Trust-Fund "Enhancing Human Security" (ITF), established in March 1998 by the Slovenian Government to help solving humanitarian crises caused by anti-personnel mines and other unexploded remnants of war in our neighbouring region of South-Eastern Europe. Outstanding results in the countries of the region have encouraged further engagement, and today the ITF is actively engaged in many other mine-affected regions and countries in the world.

Through ITF Slovenia has, together with other donors to whom we thank, responded to the needs of children and adults affected by conflicts in different states and regions in the world. Over 1,3 million items of excess ammunition destroyed. 277,500 dangerous ammunitions and 91 tons of un-exploded ordnances removed after ammunition depot explosions. **1,277** mine survivors received rehabilitation treatment in Slovenia, Bosnia and Herzegovina and Lebanon. Over **17,000** mine survivors and other disabled persons received psycho-social assistance. Over **1,400** children mine survivors attended summer and winter rehabilitation camps. Over **880** mine survivors that were engaged in socio-economic programs received economic assets, loads or scholarships. ITF has also been focused on conventional weapons destruction, risk education and capacity building, training and regional cooperation. Over 1,100 experts received training in the field of humanitarian demining, victim assistance, stockpile destruction and/or mine action management.

Slovenia strongly condemns the use of antipersonnel mines and cluster munitions and calls for the universalization of relevant Conventions as well as full respect for international humanitarian law. We also call upon all sides to refrain from use of weapons that do not distinguish combatants and civilians.

It was with regret for Slovenia to learn that its 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. Slovenia remains fully committed to its obligations under the Convention and is



doing everything in its power to ensure the irreversible destruction of the remaining elements of the munitions before the deadline. Just recently we were informed that the service provider will be able to continue destroying the remaining elements shortly.

Slovenia supports the efforts to universalise the Convention on Certain Conventional Weapons (CCW), which remains one of the leading instruments in the field of conventional weapons. Slovenia supports the decision to debate and make steps forward related to the regulation of the emerging field of Lethal Autonomous Weapons Systems (LAWS) in the Group of Governmental Experts (GGE), and looks forward to the meeting of the group in November.

Finally, Mr. Chairman, 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 Chairman