EU Statement

By

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At the General Debate of the 69th Session of the
UN General Assembly First Committee

United Nations
New York
7 October 2014

- CHECK AGAINST DELIVERY-
I have the honour to speak on behalf of the European Union.

1. Let me first of all congratulate you, Mr Chairman, for taking up this important duty and pledge our full support. We thank you for the transparent way in which you have conducted the preparations for this meeting.

2. At this juncture, I would like to highlight a couple of topics of key importance for the European Union. We will further elaborate on those as well as on other issues in our thematic statements.

3. The EU remains committed to treaty-based nuclear disarmament and arms control and promotes universal adherence to and full implementation of all non-proliferation and disarmament treaties and conventions.

4. The European Union has consistently supported international efforts addressing the humanitarian, socio-economic and security impact of conventional weapons and halting their indiscriminate use. The respect for relevant International Law is crucial to ensure the protection of civilians in armed conflicts.

5. The EU warmly welcomes the entry into force, officially this December, of the landmark Arms Trade Treaty. This achievement represents a major success for effective multilateralism. The ATT will significantly contribute to international peace and security by establishing robust and effective common international standards for the regulation of the international trade in conventional arms, contributing to make it more responsible and transparent and reducing the illicit trade of arms. Further to the Treaty's entry into force, its effective implementation and universalization will be essential for its success and relevance. Recognizing this, the EU will provide tangible support for third countries.

6. We warmly welcome the signatures and ratifications deposited from all regions so far and call on all States who have not yet done so, to become signatories and States Parties to the Treaty. All EU Member States are signatories of the Treaty and so far 23 have ratified it and the remaining ratifications are expected shortly. Thus, EU Member States have contributed significantly to reaching the threshold of the 50 ratifications needed for entry into force. We express our gratitude to the Government of Mexico for holding the first round of informal consultations and we look forward to the second round to be held in Berlin next month.

7. The Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty (CTBT) is of crucial importance to nuclear disarmament and non-proliferation and its entry into force and universalization remain top priorities for the EU. We will continue to promote this objective though our diplomatic and financial engagement. Pending the entry into force of the Treaty, the EU calls on all States, including the DPRK, to abide by a moratorium on nuclear weapon test explosions or any other nuclear explosion, to refrain from any action that would defeat the object and purpose of the Treaty. We reiterate our call on all States that have not yet done so, in particular those listed in Annex 2 of the Treaty, to sign and ratify it.

8. The EU strongly condemns the violation of several commitments by the Russian Federation to refrain from the threat or use of force against the territorial integrity or sovereignty of Ukraine under the Budapest memorandum of 1994 on security assurances in
connection with Ukraine’s accession to the NPT as a non-nuclear weapon State. We express our concern about the possible consequences of further deterioration of the international context on disarmament efforts.

9. The EU continues to strongly support the outcome of the 2010 NPT Review Conference on the Middle East and remains fully committed to the establishment of a zone free of weapons of mass destruction and their delivery systems in the Middle East. We regret that it has not been possible so far to convene a Conference on the establishment of such a zone to be attended by all States of the region. We continue to fully support the ongoing preparations and commend the Facilitator, Ambassador Laajava of Finland and his team for their tireless efforts in this regard. We find the series of informal meetings in Switzerland encouraging. The EU calls on all States in the region to urgently and proactively engage with the Facilitator, the co-convenors and each other with the aim of convening the Conference as soon as possible, on the basis of arrangements freely arrived at between the States of the region.

10. The EU has condemned, in the strongest possible terms, the DPRK's nuclear test of February 2013, as well as the DPRK’s threat of another nuclear test and has urged the DPRK to refrain from further provocative actions. The February 2013 nuclear test was another blatant challenge to the global non-proliferation regime and an outright violation of the DPRK’s international obligations, in particular under UN Security Council Resolutions 1718, 1874 and 2087. The EU will continue to work with key partners and the wider international community to demonstrate to the DPRK, that there are consequences for its continued violations of UNSC Resolutions. We once again urge the DPRK to abandon its nuclear weapons programme, including its uranium enrichment programme and the ongoing activities at the Yongbyon site, in a complete, verifiable and irreversible manner. We call on the DPRK to return to full compliance with the NPT and to comply with all its international obligations fully, unconditionally and without delay.

11. The EU fully supports the ongoing diplomatic efforts led by the High Representative, together with China, France, Germany, the Russian Federation, the UK and the US to seek a diplomatic solution with Iran to the Iranian nuclear issue. The EU welcomes the Joint Plan of Action (JPA) between Iran and the E3/EU+3, and the Framework for Cooperation between Iran and the IAEA and that Iran continues to implement the measures under the JPA. It is essential and urgent that Iran cooperates fully with the Agency regarding Possible Military Dimensions. The EU underlines that resolving all outstanding issues will be essential to achieve a comprehensive, negotiated long-term settlement, which is the EU's objective. It is vital that Iran engages fully with the IAEA to resolve all outstanding issues in order to build international confidence in the exclusively peaceful nature of the Iranian nuclear programme. The EU is deeply concerned that the Agency is unable to provide credible assurances about the absence of undeclared nuclear material and activities in Iran, and therefore is not able to conclude that all nuclear material in Iran is in peaceful activities.

12. The EU fully supported the adoption of the resolution of the Board of Governors of 9 June 2011, which reported Syria's non-compliance with its Safeguards Agreement to the UN Security Council and the General Assembly. The EU deeply regrets that Syria has still to remedy its non-compliance by cooperating as a matter of priority and transparently with the Agency to resolve all outstanding issues, and by signing, bringing into force and implementing in full an Additional Protocol as soon as possible.
13. The European Union remains committed to ensuring the responsible development of peaceful uses of nuclear energy by countries wishing to develop their capacities in this field. In this regard, we stress the key role played by the IAEA and reaffirm that the Agency's Comprehensive Safeguards Agreement, together with the Additional Protocol, should be accepted universally as the international verification standard. The EU is convinced that consistent and universal implementation of the State Level Concept will further strengthen the efficiency and effectiveness of the IAEA Safeguards System and will thus contribute to global non-proliferation efforts.

14. The EU and its Member States attach great importance to increasing transparency and trust between countries that are developing nuclear construction projects including in the vicinity or not of other countries and those affected by such projects. In this regard, all nuclear power plants planned or under construction should meet the highest standards of nuclear safety, security and non-proliferation, in full compliance with all relevant international agreements.

15. The European Union stands united in condemning, in the strongest terms, all use of chemical weapons in Syria, which constitutes a violation of international law, a war crime, and a crime against humanity. There can be no impunity and perpetrators of the attacks must be held accountable.

16. The international community over the last year cooperated effectively and acted promptly in carrying out the destruction of Syria's declared chemical weapons stockpile, in line with UN Security Council Resolution 2118 and the decisions by the Organisation for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons (OPCW) Executive Council. The removal and subsequent destruction of the declared Syrian chemicals constitute a significant step towards the necessary complete and irreversible dismantling of the Syrian chemical weapons programme. The EU contributed 17 million euro for the joint UN/OPCW Plan for the destruction of Syria's chemical weapons. In addition, several EU Member States made important financial and other contributions to support the plan and accepted the destruction of materials on their territories.

17. However, there is still work to be done. In particular the European Union is gravely concerned about the systematic and repeated use of a toxic chemical as weapon since last April as confirmed in the second report of the OPCW Fact Finding Mission (FFM) set up to establish the facts around these allegations. New similar allegations are continuing to be made. The EU shares the view that the evidence presented by the FFM is substantial. This included reports of the use of helicopters, a capability that only the Syrian regime possesses. We support the Director-General's decision that the FFM continue its work and we remain determined to sanction those responsible for these horrific acts. Syria must also ensure that its chemical weapons programme is completely and irreversibly dismantled, including the remaining production facilities.

18. The EU and its Member States have a longstanding position in favour of the preservation of a safe and secure space environment and peaceful uses of outer space on an equitable and mutually acceptable basis.

19. The consensus report by the UN Group of Governmental Experts (GGE) on Outer Space Transparency and Confidence Building Measures in Outer Space Activities finalized in July 2013 noted the EU's proposal and endorsed efforts to pursue political commitments including
a multilateral code of conduct. In its resolution 68/50 adopted in December 2013 without a vote, the UN General Assembly endorsed the report of the GGE. The resolution, tabled by China, Russia and the USA and co-sponsored by all EU Member States, called on UN Member States to review and implement the proposed transparency and confidence-building measures contained in the GGE report. One of these measures is the proposal for a voluntary International Code of Conduct.

20. We are convinced that this Code of Conduct would be a valuable step on the way to increasing understanding and creating a sustainable Outer Space. It is in this context that we are consulting UN member states on the Code of Conduct at the UNGA First Committee on the implementation of TCBMs in Outer Space Activities and the commencement of negotiations on an International Code of Conduct.