

Follow-up of resolutions and decisions adopted by the First Committee
at its past session / Presentation of reports

**Statement before
the First Committee of the General Assembly**

by

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I welcome this opportunity to address the First Committee on the subject of the implementation of resolutions. This is the eighth consecutive year that the Secretariat has been asked to address this issue.

The members of this Committee devote much time and effort to the consideration and adoption of resolutions—and given that such activities form the Committee's primary function in the UN disarmament machinery, Member States are understandably interested in receiving some feedback on how these resolutions are being implemented. Of the 50 or so resolutions adopted annually by the Committee, typically more than half request the Secretary-General to seek the views of Member States on their implementation.

Before I proceed with this year's summary, I wish to underscore the potential usefulness of these reports as an indicator of the priority that Member States attach to the achievement of goals associated with their resolutions. Some of the views provided by Member States help in identifying difficulties in implementation, while others point to possible solutions and alternative ways of overcoming such challenges.

I would also like to note that efforts have been underway since the adoption of Resolution 59/95 in 2004 to improve the effectiveness of the work of this Committee, including efforts to reduce the number of resolutions and their required reports, through the process of consolidating resolutions or adopting them on a multi-year basis. The results of these efforts, however, have been mixed.

Last year, for example, the Committee adopted 55 resolutions, which was six more than in 2009. Yet the 26 reports requested from the Secretary-General were fewer than in several years, a change that reflects these consolidation reforms. It is clear, however, that Member States continue to view such reports as useful in producing some feedback on the implementation of these resolutions.

I wish to emphasize that most of the reports submitted by the Secretary-General consist of compilations of views of Member States, rather than substantive text drafted by the Secretariat, which the Secretariat was not asked to prepare.

In offering my summary today, I am pleased to attach to my statement four tables that provide a wealth of detail about these reports. For our purposes today, I will only offer a few general observations about what these reports are saying.

Table I provides a comparison of the response rates in the 65th and 66th sessions of the General Assembly for 13 annual resolutions containing the views of Member States. For seven of these resolutions, there was an increase in Member State responses. There was, however, a decline in responses for three resolutions—specifically, those dealing with measures to prevent terrorists from acquiring WMD, and the two resolutions dealing with the UN's primary transparency tools—the United Nations Register of Conventional Arms and the Standardized Instrument for reporting on military expenditures. There was no change in the number of views received for the

resolution on disarmament and development, and there was a new resolution on the arms trade treaty for which no comparison is possible. In general, the response rate to the requests for views of Member States has remained low with respect to all the resolutions—in seven of these reports, only 10 or less Member States responded to the requests of the Secretary-General, a response rate of less than 5%. In many cases, entire regions did not respond to his requests for views.

Table II takes a closer look at 11 reports containing the views of Member States submitted during the 65th and 66th sessions. It identifies the Member States who submitted views, records whether the submitted reports met the requisite deadline, identifies the participation of the main sponsors, and summarizes the regional distribution of the responses. Country breakdowns for the two UN transparency instruments—the Register of Conventional Arms and the Standardized Instrument—are available in the reports on those issues—they are omitted in Table II due to space constraints.

This table also shows some notable increases in submission of views for five resolutions spanning a wide range of subjects on the disarmament agenda. These concerned: the establishment of a nuclear-weapon-free zone in the Middle East; follow-up on the 1996 Advisory Opinion of the International Court of Justice; confidence-building measures in the regional and sub-regional context; conventional arms control; and the observance of environmental norms in disarmament and arms control.

In addition, the table shows that Member States have generally been meeting their deadlines for submitting their views and that at least some of the main sponsors of all the resolutions provided their views.

Turning now to Tables III and IV—I will be very brief. We have decided this year to split Table III into two separate tables because this better distinguishes between the sources of those reports. Table III lists those reports submitted by UNODA pertaining largely to the activities of various institutions of the UN disarmament machinery, including the Advisory Board on Disarmament Matters, the three UN regional centres for peace and disarmament, and the United Nations Standing Advisory Committee on Security Questions in Central Africa. Table IV lists some additional reports submitted by other sources—namely, the UN Institute for Disarmament Research, the CTBTO Preparatory Commission, the Organisation for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons, and the report of the Group of Governmental Experts on the Standardized Instrument for reporting military expenditures.

I would like to note here that UNODA has continued to do all it can to encourage a higher response rate to the requests by the Secretary-General for such views. For example, we deliver *notes verbales* at the beginning of each year seeking the views of Member States, and we post in the Journal reminders of such requests and their deadlines. If requested by Member States, we can also post their submissions on the UNODA web site.

In addition, we remain actively engaged in many other activities to promote implementation of these resolutions, including through using our close working relationships with relevant intergovernmental and regional organizations, as well as with individual governments. We continue to organize seminars and workshops to assist Member States in implementing these resolutions, including Security Council Resolution 1540.

Our goal in all of this work remains the same—to be useful to Member States in advancing a robust multilateral disarmament agenda, and my summary today of these reports is very much provided with that same goal in mind.