

**CANADIAN GENERAL DEBATE STATEMENT  
FIRST COMMITTEE OF THE 71<sup>TH</sup> SESSION OF THE UNITED NATIONS GENERAL ASSEMBLY**

Mr. Chair,

Let me congratulate you and the members of the Bureau on your election, and assure you of the full support of my delegation in the important work of this Committee.

I will be delivering an abridged version of Canada's statement to facilitate expeditious First Committee proceedings, but a full version of our statement will be available on .

I take the floor today amid both enduring and emerging threats to our collective security and global peace. These include: the proliferation, use or potential use, of weapons of mass destruction; conflicts and crises in Syria, Ukraine, and South Sudan; North Korea's provocative and reckless actions; and conventional small arms and light weapons proliferation – which all demand our urgent attention.

In the face of these pressing challenges, we need a revitalised commitment to advance non-proliferation, arms control and disarmament goals.

Mr. Chair,

While Canada and many other states are seized with the need to move forward on nuclear non-proliferation and disarmament issues, the system designed to do so continues to fail us. We are particularly disheartened that after 20 years the CD remains unable to start negotiating a Fissile Material Cut-off Treaty (FMCT), despite recent efforts to achieve a breakthrough. For this reason, Canada, Germany and the Netherlands intend to introduce this year a resolution that aims to build on the report of the recent Group of Governmental Experts and make serious progress toward FMCT negotiations. While we fully expect that eventual negotiation of an FMCT will be lengthy and complex, Canada will do everything possible to facilitate this process

Mr. Chair,

Canada engaged constructively in the recent Open-ended Working Group on nuclear disarmament, and regretted that the states possessing nuclear weapons did not join the conversation. We also shared the disappointment of others that the group was unable to reach a consensus on its final report. However, we are deeply concerned that a key recommendation of the OEWG report may deepen divisions on nuclear disarmament and make genuine disarmament progress more, not less, difficult. North Korea's accelerating pace of proliferation, with two nuclear tests and over 20 ballistic missile tests so far this year – poses a very real threat to both regional and international peace and security. These illegal actions contravene North Korea's own undertakings and successive UN Security Council Resolutions. We therefore call on all states to fully and effectively implement UN sanctions in order to convince North Korea to change course and return to the negotiating table. We call on North Korea to take immediate and verifiable steps to denuclearize, comply with its international obligations including relevant UN Security Council resolutions, and engage meaningfully in Six-Party Talks.

Mr. Chair,

On Chemical Weapons, there is good news about Libya. Canada welcomes the removal and complete destruction of Libya's remaining chemical weapons precursors, ensuring that they will not fall into the hands of Daesh or other armed groups in North Africa. This marks the last chapter in a multi-year

international effort to help Libya eliminate its chemical weapons program Preventing access to weapons of mass destruction by non-state actors, including terrorists, remains a top priority for Canada.

The news on Syria is dire. Canada is gravely concerned by the continued use of chemical weapons in Syria and by the findings of the OPCW-UN Joint Investigative Mechanism which attributed at least two chlorine attacks to Syrian government forces and one sulphur mustard attack to Daesh. The perpetrators are in clear violation of the Chemical Weapons Convention, UNSC Resolution 2118 and international humanitarian law, and should be brought to justice immediately. At the same time, we commend the tremendous work by the OPCW to verifiably destroy Syria's chemical weapons program. We call on Syria to fully comply with UN Security Council Resolution 2118, to ensure the prompt resolution of all ambiguities with regards to its declaration, and carry out its obligation to completely destroy its remaining chemical weapons facilities.

Mr. Chair,

The Eighth Review Conference of the Biological and Toxin Weapons Convention (BTWC) will be held next month in Geneva. Canada was particularly pleased to work with the People's Republic of China and the Implementation Support Unit on a conference in Wuxi, China last month to advance key issues in the lead-up to the Review Conference. We believe the Review Conference provides a timely opportunity to strengthen the BTWC's global ban on biological weapons. Canada's priority is to improve the review of science and technology within the Convention, and promote effective national implementation of the Convention in ways that permit legitimate life sciences research to continue. We also value voluntary transparency activities that share best practices on implementation and improve confidence in compliance with the Convention.

Mr. Chair,

Turning to conventional weapons, Canada views the Arms Trade Treaty as an effective response to the unregulated arms transfers that intensify and prolong conflict, lead to regional instability, contribute to violations of international humanitarian law and human rights abuses, and hinder social and economic development. For these reasons, we are committed to becoming a State Party to the Arms Trade Treaty, as rapidly as possible.

The Anti-Personnel Mine Ban Convention has made an enormous contribution towards establishing a global norm against the use of anti-personnel mines, but these weapons continue to be used in certain regions of the world and every day maim or kill innocent people. The full implementation of the Ottawa Convention is the only way to end the human suffering caused by anti-personnel mines. Canada is committed to working towards the goal of the Maputo Declaration to implement the Convention's obligations by 2025. This will only be possible through increased engagement by States Parties, the universalization of the Convention, and the dedication of all states to mine action. We look forward to the upcoming Meeting of States Parties in Santiago, Chile where we will address these issues.

Canada is also fully committed to the goals and objectives of the Convention on Cluster Munitions aimed at reducing the devastating impact of these weapons on civilians.

In the last decade, Canada has contributed C\$237 million to address the humanitarian impact of mines, cluster munitions, and explosive remnants of war. We call on all States, including those outside these Conventions, to cease the use of anti-personnel mines and cluster munitions, to stop use by non-State actors within their jurisdictions, and to support mine and cluster munition victims.

To conclude, Mr. Chair,

Canada stands ready to contribute to a constructive, fruitful session of this First Committee. It is our sincere hope that we be able to achieve concrete progress on this year's disarmament and non-proliferation agenda that will strengthen international peace and security.