



## Statement of the Republic of Estonia

At the General Debate of the 71<sup>st</sup> Session of the UN General Assembly First Committee

New York, 10 October 2016

Mr Chairman, let me first congratulate you on assuming the Chairmanship of the 71<sup>st</sup> Session of the UNGA First Committee. You can be assured of my delegation's support and cooperation in fulfilling your mandate. Aligning ourselves fully with the statement made by the European Union, we would like to highlight some specific issues to which Estonia attaches particular importance at this year's session of the First Committee.

Today, in too many parts of the world, we find **conflicts either emerging, raging or frozen**. If we do not take control, the on-going conflicts we see around the world, will breed terrorism that knows no boundaries. The security situation in Europe and beyond causes a great deal of concern. For the first time since World War II, borders in Europe have been changed by use of force and aggressive actions against the sovereignty, territorial integrity and independence of Ukraine are continuing.

Not all of today's conflicts and crises could have been prevented. Yet the effect of many could have been mitigated had we acted sooner, had the proper mechanisms to resolve them been in place, had the international law and relevant conventions and regimes been strengthened and effectively implemented. That is why in order to enhance global security and stability the international community has to strive for making progress towards **universalisation, effective implementation and strengthening** of existing international disarmament, arms control and non-proliferation instruments and regimes.

Mr Chairman, the **Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty (NPT)** is and remains the true cornerstone of the global efforts to pursue nuclear disarmament, non-proliferation and peaceful use of nuclear energy. That is why it is important to stress that any nuclear disarmament initiatives should be in conformity with the NPT and should work for the strengthening of the regime. Vice versa, the idea of a ban treaty is threatening to undermine the NPT. It's a delusion to implement a ban treaty without nuclear-weapon states, without strong verification mechanism and to not take into account

the security environment. Estonia shares the ultimate goals of the nuclear disarmament, a world without nuclear weapons, but we note with concern the absence of consensus on how to achieve our shared goal. We support a realistic progressive approach towards nuclear disarmament and continue to believe that the ban treaty is already enshrined in NPT as a last step to achieve our shared goal of the world without nuclear weapons.

Mr, Chairman, Estonia remains deeply concerned by the long-standing deadlock of **the Conference on Disarmament**. The CD's agenda encompasses global concerns and we believe that those concerns should be negotiated on a non-discriminatory, transparent and multilateral basis, with a wider participation of interested states. I would like to reiterate Estonia's request to participate fully and equally in the disarmament discussions as a full member of the CD.

The **Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty (CTBT)** is a vital multilateral instrument for international disarmament and non-proliferation and we therefore deeply regret, that today, when we mark 20th anniversary of the opening of the CTBT for signature, the Treaty still has not entered into force. Welcoming recent ratifications of the Treaty by Myanmar and Swaziland, we urge all States, particularly those whose adherence is required for the CTBT to enter into force, to sign and ratify the Treaty without further delay. My delegation was also among those who co-sponsored the resolution 2310 adopted by the Security Council on September 23<sup>rd</sup>.

The **proliferation of nuclear weapons and other weapons of mass destruction** remain a very serious threat. We condemn in the strongest possible terms all nuclear tests conducted by the **DPRK** and the ongoing activity to further develop its nuclear weapons and ballistic missile programmes. It is of crucial importance that the DPRK will change its course and come back to compliance with its international obligations. We also condemn in the strongest terms all use of chemical weapons in Syria or anywhere else, by anyone, including non-state actors, and under any circumstances. There must be **accountability** for such horrendous attacks. We expect a strong resolution of the First Committee on the implementation of the Chemical Weapons Convention (CWC). We welcome the successful removal of chemical weapons from Lybia for destruction outside the country as a positive development, which illustrate the relevance of the OPCW vis-à-vis the risk of non-state actors and terrorism.

We note with concern, that ballistic missiles and related technologies are still used around the world as operational weapons. In this regard we believe that the **Missile Technology Control Regime (MTCR)** and the **Hague Code of Conduct (HCoC)** play a central role in preventing missile

proliferation. We believe that Estonia's membership in the MTCR would strengthen the regime and international non-proliferation efforts. We also strongly speak for the membership of all EU Member States in the MTCR, since they all meet the highest standards and criteria set by the regime.

Mr. Chairman, turning to the **security in cyber space**, Estonia is a member of the Group of Governmental Experts on the Developments in the Field of Information and Telecommunication in the Context of International Security – the GGE - for the fourth consecutive time. The current GGE is faced with an expectation to take us beyond positions previously agreed on. The GGE has been a very productive format of work. In the future, it could be a useful instrument not only for studying the cyber threats and possible remedies, but also for different countries to apply the existing international law and norms, rules and principles. We could invite all countries to share their views on implementing the proposals of the GGE with the First Committee. For Estonia, international law is the biggest authority, also regarding the use of ICTs. We therefore strive for clarity and certainty of norms as it not only reduces the risk of intolerable practices, but provides transparency and predictability of behaviour that allows us to focus on peace rather than on conflict.

My country is also determined to support **humanitarian demining and mine action**; we increased our contributions over the past few years and we continue to do so. This includes financial support to the United Nations Mine Action Service (UNMAS), as well as to clean-up of various explosive remnants of war and mine-clearance activities under several bilateral and international humanitarian projects. We also urge all States who have not done so, to join the Anti-Personnel Mine Ban Treaty.

Mr Chairman, amidst current conflicts and crises it is also important to ensure that women and children do not fall victim to gender-based violence and are included in conflict resolution and peace negotiations. Therefore, it is paramount to continue to implement UNSCR resolution 1325 and related resolutions on **women, peace and security**.

Finally, Mr Chairman, we are determined to contribute to the efforts of the international community **to strengthen the implementation** of existing disarmament and arms control instruments, such as Convention on Certain Conventional Weapons, Biological Weapons Convention, resolution 1540, ATT and UN Programme of Action to curb the illicit trade in small arms and light weapons. We have to seize the opportunity to strengthen the above mentioned instruments during several review processes we have this year.

Thank you, Mr Chairman.