



SERBIA

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STATEMENT

by

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UNITED NATIONS

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Mr. Chairman,

I join my colleagues in congratulating you and other members of the Bureau on the election to your respective posts. Also, I take this opportunity to assure you of the full support of my delegation as you undertake to discharge your important duties.

Serbia has aligned itself with the Statement of the European Union made earlier in this year's debate. However, I shall take a few moments to highlight some of the priorities of my country and some actions that we have taken with respect to some of the important issues on our agenda.

The global security environment, Mr. Chairman, has been in a state of flux in the last several years and the problems brought in its train continue to multiply and become ever more intricate and challenging for the international community to address and resolve. In a world of rising interdependence and complexity, no country has remained unaffected, particularly by the spread of terrorism and the proliferation of weapons of mass destruction (WMD). The issues, therefore, related to arms control, disarmament and non-proliferation become ever more important and the topics we have been discussing these days ever more

relevant. What we need is to join forces in the quest for joint solutions as we proceed from the premise that productive multilateralism is necessary, as well as achievable, if we all demonstrate readiness and commitment to working together in the spirit of cooperation and compromise.

Stepping back in time to the very first General Assembly of our Organization and the first Resolution it adopted in January 1946, calling “for control of atomic energy [...] to ensure its use only for peaceful purposes” and “for elimination [...] of other weapons adaptable to mass destruction”, we can see that we are miles away from the goal that we set ourselves at that time of a world without nuclear weapons. WMD proliferation and modernization, particularly of nuclear weapons, present serious challenges to international peace and stability and make it more difficult for the process of sustainable development to evolve. What we need is unity in our endeavours to build a safe and more secure world and the first, right step in that direction is respect for the existing international principles and norms in the field of disarmament, non-proliferation and arms control.

Serbia has acceded to all key international documents in this area. We consider the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT) to be the mainstay of the structure of international security, underpinning the international non-proliferation regime and the use of nuclear energy for peaceful purposes. The non-proliferation continues to be the essence of the NPT regime. Equally important are the efforts to further improve international verifications of the NPT obligations aimed at upholding the integrity of the Treaty by addressing non-compliance.

20 years have passed since the Comprehensive Test Ban Treaty (CTBT) was opened for signature. This unique anniversary reminded us of what the international community has achieved in this area, as well as of what lies ahead if conditions are to be created for the implementation of the Treaty. Serbia ratified the CTBT in 2004 and joins the countries that strongly support its universal implementation at the soonest possible time. My country is also firmly committed to full compliance with all CTBT obligations, including its Verification Mechanism as an effective instrument for preventing and discouraging nuclear weapons development and proliferation. The *de facto* moratorium on nuclear testing must be maintained, but it is no substitute for the CTBT implementation, for it is only through implementing the Treaty that we can move closer to our goal of a nuclear-free world that we set ourselves a long time ago.

Mr. Chairman,

My country is a staunch supporter of the strengthening of the nuclear weapons non-proliferation regime and the prevention of nuclear terrorism. I take this opportunity to advise in that connection that the National Assembly of the Republic of Serbia ratified the Amendments to the Convention on the Physical Protection of Nuclear Material last March and the Amendments entered into force last May. National regulation of nuclear security is of paramount importance as it provides a legal basis for the adoption of the Vulnerability Assessment and the Physical Protection System. The adoption is expected to help us achieve our long-term goals, including the strengthening of professional capacities in the field of nuclear security and a continued implementation of International Conventions in this area.

The topics related to the challenges presented by the chemical, biological, radiological and nuclear (CBRN) technologies and materials are also very important. This

year, Serbia acceded to the Group of Friends of CBRN Risk Mitigation and Security Governance, established by Georgia, Morocco and the Philippines with the aim of integrating this component in the international security structure as well. Currently, my country is in the process of finalizing its CBRN National Action Plan.

Serbia continues to attach great importance to the compliance with the provisions of UNSCR 1540 (2004) and the adoption of legal and regulatory mechanisms for the prevention of WMD proliferation and the means of delivery and, especially, of their acquisition by non-State actors. By active participation in the Group of Friends of the Resolution, we are following the process of its comprehensive revision. The National Plan for its implementation is expected to be upgraded accordingly. The country which held the OSCE chairmanship in 2015 and a member of the OSCE Troika this year, Serbia accorded special attention to the implementation of the Resolution in the OSCE area, a positive example of cooperation among international organizations in the field of WMD non-proliferation.

My country is committed to a full implementation of the Conventions on Chemical (CWC) and Biological Weapons (BWC). We believe that the forthcoming 8th BWC Review Conference to be held at Geneva in November will provide the Parties to the Convention with an opportunity to define and adopt measures to strengthen its implementation.

Mr. Chairman,

Illicit trade in conventional weapons continues to threaten regional and international security and stability and to affect the lives of millions of people all over the world. To counter this phenomenon and its consequences, Serbia continues to actively support a global implementation of the Arms Trade Treaty (ATT). Representatives of my country took part in the Second Conference of ATT States Parties held recently in Geneva. Proceeding from its national obligations under the Treaty, my country submitted the Initial and First national annual reports.

We believe that a regional approach to cooperation in the field of arms export control, including cooperation in compliance with ATT obligations, is very important. In that context, the countries of the Western Balkans have established an effective regional cooperation mechanism in the field of small arms and light weapons export control (Centre for Small Arms and Light Weapons in Southeast Europe), the contribution of which to regional confidence-building, transfer of knowledge and best practices and information exchange is invaluable indeed.

Another important example of successful, sub-regional, cooperation should also be mentioned: the implementation of the Agreement on Sub-Regional Arms Control based on Article IV of the Dayton Peace Accords. Concluded ten years ago, it continues to be implemented even after the completion of the term of office of the OSCE Personal Representative in December 2014 whereafter its States Parties, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Croatia, Montenegro and Serbia, took over the competencies and responsibilities for its continued implementation. The Agreement is a practical embodiment of an arms control model that could be successfully implemented in other regions as well and that, commensurate with regions' specific needs, has a trans-regional appeal.

Mr. Chairman,

Last but not least, I would like to address, in a few words, the calls made these days with regard to the importance and the need to “re-activate” the Conference on Disarmament (CD) at Geneva as the main multilateral negotiating body in this area. It is my country’s earnest hope that the Conference will finally consider another substantive issue of special importance for my country: the expansion of CD membership. There is certainly a need for the expansion because the issues on the CD agenda are very important for a much larger number of countries than the current 65 CD member States. They are universal in nature and should be discussed and negotiated on a non-discriminatory, transparent and multilateral basis and each country desirous of doing so should be given an opportunity to participate in the process and assume its share of responsibility. A clear political will is necessary in order to overcome the current impasse and re-start serious discussion of the substantive issues and make a credible contribution to international peace and security. To that end, Serbia stands ready to make its own active contribution.

Thank you for your attention.