



**71st Session of the United Nations General Assembly
First Committee**

**Remarks by Alice Guitton
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to the Conference on Disarmament
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New York, XX October 2016

REGIONAL DISARMAMENT AND SECURITY

Mr Chairman,

The regional dimension of the First Committee's work is an issue of great importance to my delegation.

At regional level, ambitious best practices that may inspire our work in UN forums and disarmament conventions with universal scope may indeed take root among former adversaries that have learned to work together to build a neighborhood of peace.

The European Union is the best example of this as it has succeeded in drawing the lessons from a painful past to build a lasting peace by inventing a new governance of divergences, namely "unity in diversity". The EU enables its partners to benefit from this experience through its neighbourhood policy and the cooperation it provides to third States. EU cooperation tools have a strong regional dimension, including in the field of disarmament: for example, France is actively participating in the EU assistance programme to promote the entry into force, early universalization and effective implementation of the Arms Trade Treaty. Last year, it conducted sub-regional workshops on this theme in Senegal and Burkina Faso.

Also in partnership with the G5 Sahel countries (Chad, Niger, Burkina Faso, Mali and Mauritania), and in the framework of Operations Serval and now Barkhane, French forces are conducting many operations to restrain the freedom of action of armed terrorist groups

in the region, hinder their logistics and deprive them of their combat resources by searching for and dismantling their arms, ammunition and, more particularly, explosives caches. They are also regularly involved in countering explosive devices, in support of the United Nations Multidimensional Integrated Stabilization Mission in Mali (MINUSMA).

The regional approach is also a key way of promoting nuclear disarmament and non-proliferation. France fully supports the creation of nuclear-weapon-free zones. We have already signed and ratified the Protocols to the treaties establishing such zones in Latin America and the Caribbean, the South Pacific, Africa, and, more recently, Central Asia, and given negative security assurances to States in the zone. France is also prepared to sign the Protocol to the Bangkok Treaty establishing a nuclear-weapon-free zone in Southeast Asia and has supported from the start the establishment of a zone free of nuclear weapons and other weapons of mass destruction and their means of delivery in the Middle East. This crucial objective also calls for a lasting resolution of proliferation crises and accession at the appropriate time, by all States of the region to all relevant non-proliferation and disarmament conventions.

Mr Chairman,

At the European level, France, like the other EU Member States, strongly supports **establishing transparency and confidence-building measures adapted to the geostrategic situation in the region**. The Treaty on Conventional Forces in Europe has enabled the destruction of a great deal of equipment: my country cannot reconcile itself to seeing it wither away and calls on all the parties to create the conditions to return to its full and comprehensive implementation. The Treaty on Open Skies, which allows the daily overflight of very vast territories from Vancouver to Vladivostok, also promotes greater symmetry between European States. The Vienna Document, for its part, is as much a confidence-building as a transparency and risk-reduction instrument: my delegation calls on all States concerned to resolutely commit in good faith to its ongoing modernization to adapt it to changing military doctrine and equipment. In view of the threats to this European security architecture, France supports the impetus given by the German Foreign Minister Dr Steinmeier with a view to reviving conventional arms control in Europe to sustain the OSCE Acquis (Helsinki Final Act, Paris Charter, the declarations made in Istanbul and Astana, etc.) without duplicating the work conducted in other forums that have proved useful.

Other forms of cooperation exist within the Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe, notably on the fight against the proliferation of weapons of mass destruction or transversal threats, cyber-security and the management of small arms and light weapons and ammunition stockpiles: they are studied closely by the OSCE's partners in Asia and the Mediterranean as best practices that can be adapted to their specific regional environment.

Mr Chairman,

Global, regional and sub-regional non-proliferation and disarmament initiatives can be mutually reinforcing when they are designed with a view to achieving complementarity.

The mobilization of the international community against the threat of explosive remnants of war or improvised explosive devices (IEDs) is a good example of this:

- **At global level**: France is coordinating work on IEDs in the framework of Amended Protocol II to the Convention on Certain Conventional Weapons (CCW). This work has made it possible to frame best practices and adopt a political declaration on the counter-IED fight.
- **At local level**, via the Angers School of Military Engineering, the French Army Joint Munitions and Explosives Hazard Centre, and the Mine Clearance Service of the General Directorate for Civil Protection and Crisis Management of the French Interior Ministry, France provides financial and logistical assistance to many training programmes for partners like Cambodia, Lebanon and Iraq (*Advise and assist* programme), Ukraine (in the framework of NATO programmes), and, naturally, the Sahel strip countries under the greatest threat of IEDs like Cameroon, Nigeria, Chad, and Niger. With the awareness-raising strip cartoon "One thousand and one Mines", the French National Centre for Humanitarian Demining proposes an effective risk prevention tool in the worst affected countries to raise awareness among populations, especially children.
- To link the global and local levels, France participates in **regional cooperation** initiatives, in particular those of the **Ouidah Mine Action and Depollution Training Centre**, in Benin. The complementarity of the expertise developed there enables the CPADD to provide equal support for our African partners in building their capacities for evaluation, upgrading, and managing SALW and ammunition stockpiles, as regards, for example, the problems linked to illicit ammunition depots in rural and urban areas, fully or partly destroyed depots, and issues of obsolescent stockpiles. These projects can serve as models and be repeated in countries with similar situations. They are designed to strengthen national institutional and operational capacities rather than to replace them.

Thank you.