



PERMANENT MISSION OF FINLAND TO THE UNITED NATIONS
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Statement by Finland at the
UNGA71 First Committee 2016

Statement by

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New York, 3 October 2016

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Mr. Chairman,

As my Delegation takes the floor for the first time, I would like to join the previous speakers in congratulating you on your election as Chairman of the First Committee. Let me assure you of the full support of my Delegation.

In addition to the statement made by the European Union, I would like to make the following remarks in my national capacity.

Last year we paid attention to the fact that we are having the First Committee debate against the backdrop of continuing international tension. Unfortunately, the situation has not changed, and we feel this also in Europe. This makes arms control, disarmament and non-proliferation efforts all the more important, and all the more urgent. Rule of law is the guiding principle of international affairs including in this field, and we should all keep on finding practical ways to build and re-build confidence.

Mr. Chairman,

Let me highlight the priorities for Finland during the weeks to come.

Firstly, nuclear disarmament and non-proliferation. The Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty (NPT) remains the cornerstone of international non-proliferation regime and a key element in the international security architecture. The commitments in all three pillars of the NPT remain valid and important, including those of the Article VI of the Treaty. Finland shares the objective of a world free of nuclear weapons and supports efforts that lead to a concrete outcome. In our view, full implementation of the NPT is crucial also in the view of nuclear disarmament. It is important to ensure the participation of the nuclear weapon states in any nuclear disarmament process, if we want to decrease the number of nuclear weapons in the world.

I would like to underline that concerns related to nuclear weapons are concerns that all of us share. We recognize that as long as nuclear weapons exist there is a risk of a catastrophe with immeasurable human and humanitarian costs. We should also think how to enhance conditions for a more conducive environment for nuclear disarmament. Transparency and confidence building measures are a key, and not only in the field of nuclear disarmament, but also in conventional arms control.

We welcome the P5 cooperation in the field of nuclear disarmament and think that such initiatives as the International Partnership on Nuclear Verification Disarmament can build common understanding and confidence also among Nuclear Weapon States and Non-Nuclear Weapon States. We underline the importance of the continued implementation of the New Start Treaty between the Russian Federation and the United States. We encourage all parties concerned to look for additional nuclear disarmament measures, including in tactical nuclear weapons.

Let me also mention the Comprehensive Nuclear Test Ban Treaty (CTBT). The entry into force of this Treaty remains a priority, even though the voluntary moratorium on nuclear weapon tests is nearly universal. I would also like to point out the importance of CTBT's verification system, the IMS network. The IMS network has provided us essential information many times in various situations. Thanks to this network, no country can hide a nuclear test anymore.

Most of us also agree that a Fissile Material Cut-off Treaty should be negotiated in the first instance. We are ready to support efforts to re-launch serious work towards this end and urge others to do the same.

Mr. Chairman,

We commend the progress achieved with Iran and the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action and stress the need for its effective implementation.

Still, the threat of nuclear weapons proliferation continues to be a serious concern.

Finland strongly condemns the nuclear test conducted by the Democratic People's Republic of Korea on 9 September. The nuclear test continues North Korea's series of grave violations of international obligations, which have become alarmingly common during this year. North Korea's nuclear test on 6 January, and several missile launches after that are indefensible violations of international agreements and obligations and extremely dangerous for the stability of the region and beyond. We urge DPRK to fully observe its international obligations, abandon its nuclear program and commit to close cooperation with the international community.

It is also important that we continue to address other threats related to nuclear and radiological material, in particular by non-state actors. The focus in nuclear security should be in prevention and here the role of information and intelligence sharing between the competent authorities is a key element, not to forget export control and other control mechanisms.

Mr. Chairman,

Let me now turn to chemical and biological threats. Finland welcomes the complete destruction of the chemical weapons declared by the Syrian Arab Republic. We contributed to this joint operation by providing financial, military and civilian assistance. We remain however concerned over the gaps, inconsistencies and discrepancies that remain in Syria's declaration. It is of utmost importance that the prompt destruction of the remaining production facilities is carried out and that the outstanding issues in the Syrian declaration are clarified. We welcome the third report of the OPCW-UN Joint Investigative Mechanism (JIM), which raises serious concern. We need to remain clear that the use of chemical weapons by anyone, anytime, and anywhere and under any circumstances is clearly contrary to international law and must be condemned by the international community. The perpetrators of these acts must be held accountable.

The safe removal of Libya's remaining chemical weapons precursors, in compliance with the Chemical Weapons Convention and the UN Security Council Resolution 2298 (2016), constitutes a positive and important development for the stability of Libya and the region more widely. Finland participated actively also in this operation by contributing 500 000 euros to the OPCW Trust Fund for Support to Libya and by posting officers for advisory and expert positions in the maritime transport operation, which was led by Denmark.

We should also pay more attention to biosecurity. Finland is strongly committed to a successful, consensus based, outcome of the Eight Review Conference of the Biological and Toxin Weapons Convention (BTWC). We would especially like to see progress in the field of science and technology, taken into consideration the rapid technological and scientific development. We also see merit in strengthening the ability to take

collective action between the Review Conferences. Furthermore, Finland supports the UN Secretary General's Mechanism for investigation of alleged use of biological and chemical weapons.

Mr. Chairman,

Let me finally address conventional weapons, especially small arms and light weapons. It is important to remember, that these weapons cause most casualties, and that often it is the civilians, particularly women and children, who are most affected by armed conflict and violence.

Finland is a strong supporter of the Arms Trade Treaty and believes in its ability to increase international peace and stability and to reduce human suffering. The ATT is a significant achievement for the international community. The Treaty was designed to provide norms for responsible trade in conventional arms, but it does much more. We welcome the substantive outcome of the Second Conference of State Parties held in Geneva in August. It provided a solid foundation forward for a functioning ATT regime.

As the current President of the ATT Conference of State Parties Finland is engaged in the joint effort to proceed from the establishment of administrative structures to substantive work. We are looking forward to the contribution of the three Working Groups. We need to ensure effective implementation especially in the context of combatting illegal and unregulated flow of arms to conflict areas. The ATT Voluntary Trust Fund will be a valuable instrument in supporting national capacity building.

The Finnish Presidency, headed by Ambassador Klaus Korhonen, and the four Vice Presidents are actively promoting the universalization of the ATT. We encourage all members of the International Community to join this important Treaty.

The numerous conflicts around the world are also creating new mine fields and other explosive hazards. In Syria and Iraq ISIL has employed extensively improvised explosive devices. Millions of Iraqi and Syrian people continue to face the deadly threat every day. Mines and IEDs seriously hamper not only the humanitarian action but also the stabilization of the region.

Finland continues to engage in a global level to alleviate the humanitarian consequences of anti-personnel mines, cluster munitions and explosive remnants of war. Finland will support humanitarian mine action during 2016-2020 with 12 million euros in Afghanistan, Syria, Iraq, Somalia and Ukraine.

Thank you, Mr. Chairman.