

Albania – UNGA 68th session, First Committee, General Debate.

Mr. Chairman,

Let me start by joining the previous speakers on congratulating you and the members of the bureau on your assumption of the chairmanship of the First Committee and to assure you of my delegation's full cooperation and support in carrying out this task throughout the session.

Albania aligned itself with the Statement made by the European Union. In addition, I would like to express the following remarks from my national perspective.

Mr. Chairman,

Albania is the first country to have completely destroyed its entire chemical agents stockpile under the terms of the CWC, declaring itself a country free from chemical warfare. I use this opportunity to congratulate the Organization for the Prohibition of the Chemical Weapons for the Nobel Peace Prize in recognition of its efforts to eliminate chemical weapons and for its potential role as "an instrument for solving the Syrian crisis". This award not only reinforces the world's denial against such lethal and indiscriminatory weapons but also recognizes the hope that one of the most appalling conflicts may finally come to a halt and hopefully finds its way toward a peaceful solution.

Albania reiterates its condemnation in the strongest terms of the chemical attacks of 21 August in Syria. The use of chemical weapons is unacceptable in any circumstances. Such despicable behavior does not and must not belong to the 21st century. We must take all measures to prevent such attacks from ever happening again and ensure that the perpetrators of such horrendous attacks are brought to justice.

In this regard, Albania fully supports the resolution 2118 of the Security Council and the decision of the Executive Council of the OPCW regarding the destruction of the Syrian chemical weapons stockpile and capabilities. Their swift and full implementation is crucial and, in this regard, my delegation is encouraged by the establishment of the Joint UN/OPCW Mission in Syria and the progress achieved so far. We look forward to its completion in the time frame anticipated.

Mr. Chairman,

This year is marked by very positive and welcomed development in the field of conventional arms, the most important one being the historic adoption of the Arms Trade Treaty. We are encouraged by the fact that, four months after its opening for signature, the Treaty has been signed by 113 Member States and ratified by 7 of them. We are pleased to see among the signatories countries that are major import - exporters of conventional weapons. We call upon all other Member States to sign and ratify the ATT without delay and we look forward to the Treaty's entry into force as soon as possible. The universality and proper implementation of the ATT are essential in order to best achieve its goals and purpose. Albania was among the first countries to sign the Arms Trade Treaty on 3rd of June and is in the final stage of its ratification.

Mr. Chairman,

Our efforts toward achieving the ultimate goal of a world without nuclear weapons must continue to remain high in our agenda. Being aware that the road toward the total elimination of the nuclear weapons is a complex process, Albania recognizes the intermediate steps toward the reduction of the nuclear stockpiles taken over the last years by the major possessing States. However, the arsenal of world's nuclear weapons remains still vast and my country looks forward to further reduction of the nuclear stockpiles in the future.

Albania believes that the Treaty of Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons, NPT remains the cornerstone of the world's framework for peace and security on nuclear disarmament, non-proliferation and peaceful use of the nuclear energy. In this regard, Albania will continue to support a balanced, meaningful and forward looking implementation of the Action Plan agreed in the 2010 NPT Review Conference while remaining hopeful of its further strengthening in the next RevCon to be held in 2015.

We must recognize the rising awareness among countries of the issue of the humanitarian impact of nuclear weapons. This concern is due to the powerful wide range and uncontrollable effect of such weapons and the indiscriminate nature of their destruction. Albania was among 128 delegations that participated in the fact-based international conference organized in March this year by the Government of Norway, which allowed us to have a better and deeper understanding of this issue.

Mr. Chairman,

An early entry into force of the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty, CTBT, remains a major contribution toward the world's peace and security. The signature and ratification of the Treaty by all states that have not yet signed and /or ratified it, especially the remaining Annex II ones, is very important and would be a valuable contribution towards worlds security. Meanwhile, those countries should refrain themselves from conducting nuclear tests and abide by the provisions of the CTBT.

The IAEA safeguards system is fundamental for the nonproliferation regime. The verification instrument of the IAEA is very important tools for the preservations of the world's peace and stability and the fight against nuclear terrorism. Albania has a Comprehensive Safeguard Agreement with the IAEA and has signed and ratified the Additional Protocol. It is our hope that all states that have not yet signed or ratified the Additional Protocol will do so as soon as possible.

Mr. Chairman,

My delegation is deeply concerned about the long continuing impasse that is preventing the Conference of Disarmament (CD) from playing its role as the world's negotiating forum of disarmament treaties. Such a deadlock is not acceptable. We hope that the CD will be able to agree on a program of work and start the substantive negotiations in all core issues of the disarmament agenda. Albania reiterates its support for the expansion of the membership of the CD and the appointment of a special coordinator in this regard. We share the opinion that countries must spare no efforts to find ways toward the revitalization of the CD.

The negotiation of a Fissile Material Cut-off Treaty, as foreseen in the 2010 NPT RevCon action plan and as mandated by the document CD/1299, remains an imperative in the nuclear disarmament agenda. Such a treaty would complement the NPT and the CTBT and in this regard, we look forward to the recommendations of the Group of Governmental Experts which will meet on this issue in 2014 and 2015, as provided by the resolution 67/53.

In conclusion Mr. Chairman, I would like to reiterate Albania's conviction and commitment to be an active part of the international community's efforts toward the revitalization of the disarmament machinery and the strengthening the disarmament and nonproliferation regime, so that we could get closer to our goal for a safer world for all of us, free of the threat of nuclear weapons and other weapons of mass destruction.

In this regard, Mr. Chairman, we look forward to closely work with you and other delegations for a successful conduct of this session of the First Committee.

Thank You!