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General debate of the First Committee

Statement of H. E. Mr. Sabri Boukadoum
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to the United Nations

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Mr. Chair,

I would like to begin by congratulating you on your election as Chair of the 72nd session of the First Committee. I would like also to congratulate the members of the Bureau on their election. You can count on the full support of my delegation.

My delegation associates itself with the statements made by Indonesia on behalf of the Non-Aligned Movement, Nigeria on behalf of the African Group and Yemen on behalf of the Arab Group.

Mr. Chair,

As a State-party to the main treaties related to weapons of mass destruction, Algeria reaffirms that nuclear disarmament and non-proliferation remain its highest priorities and expresses its determination to work towards achieving a world free of nuclear weapon.

I take this opportunity to reaffirm the principled longstanding position of Algeria to the NPT (Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty) as the cornerstone of the nuclear disarmament and non-proliferation regime and underscore the need of its full implementation as well as to ensure compliance with each of its three pillars in a balanced manner.

In this regard, while calling upon all parties outside of this Treaty to join it without delay and condition, we urge the nuclear-weapon States, which have the primary responsibility to achieve nuclear disarmament, to fulfill their Treaty’s obligations and to honor their commitments contained both in the 13 practical steps adopted in the 2000 NPT Review Conference and in the Action Plan adopted by consensus at the 2010 NPT Review Conference.

We also call upon the nuclear weapon States to demonstrate their political will to enable the 2020 NPT Review Conference to have concrete recommendations towards achieving nuclear disarmament, the ultimate objective of the NPT. For its part, Algeria will spare no effort to ensure the success of the 2020 NPT Review Conference.

Mr. Chair,

Algeria, which still continuing to suffer the human and environmental consequences of the nuclear tests carried out on its territory in the early 1960s, believes that nuclear disarmament and the total elimination of nuclear weapons are the only absolute guarantee against the use or threat of use of nuclear weapons. With this firm belief, Algeria has adhered to the humanitarian pledge, and wanted to bring its share to the international community’s awareness of the dangers of these weapons.

Based on this conviction, Algeria, which was among the first countries to sign the Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons on 20th September 2017, considers this landmark Treaty as a necessary step in delegitimizing the nuclear weapons and establishes paths towards their total elimination, and calls upon all Member States to join it. I would like to seize this opportunity to thank the States which have contributed to the adoption of this historical Treaty, and the civil society for their crucial role on this initiative.
However, Algeria reaffirms its support to the General Assembly’s decision to convene, no later than 2018, a United Nations High-Level International Conference on nuclear disarmament to review progress made in the field of nuclear disarmament.

Mr. Chair,

After more than 20 years of the opening of the CTBT for signature (Comprehensive Nuclear-Test Ban Treaty), we regret that this vital multilateral instrument for nuclear disarmament and non-proliferation, still not brought into force. In this respect, Algeria calls upon those remaining States, particularly those of Annex 2, whose ratification is required to bring the treaty into force, to ratify it without further delay.

My delegation wishes to reiterate, once again, the need for the conclusion of a legally binding instrument on Negative Security Assurances to all Non-Nuclear-Weapon States.

Mr. Chair,

My delegation strongly supports any initiative aiming at establishing of nuclear weapons free zones around the world, as they are not only confidence measures but also as concrete steps towards strengthening global nuclear disarmament and nuclear non-proliferation norms and consolidates international efforts towards peace and security.

In this regard, Algeria believes that the Pelindaba Treaty establishing a nuclear weapons free zone in Africa, represents an important contribution to the strengthening of international peace and security, and calls on, in particular, nuclear weapon States, which have not yet done so, to sign and ratify the relevant Annexes of this Treaty.

Obviously, Pelindaba Treaty example, and other nuclear-weapon-free zones should be followed in particular in the volatile region of Middle-East. Algeria deeply regrets that this region remains prevented of such status years after the adoption, by the NPT Review and Extension Conference in 1995, of the Resolution on the establishment of a nuclear- weapon-free zone in the Middle-East.

Rejecting this status quo, Algeria stresses its strong commitment to the implementation of the 1995 Resolution on the Middle East and the 2010 Action Plan and expresses its strong disappointment for adjourning the holding of the Conference on the establishment of a nuclear-weapon-free zone in the Middle-East.

Mr. Chair,

Regarding the other instruments related to mass destruction, Algeria considers that the Chemical and Biological Weapons Conventions (CWC) and (BWC) are important components of the international legal architecture and calls for their balanced, effective and non-discriminatory implementation. We call also for enhancing international cooperation to allow transfer of chemical and biological technologies, particularly to the developing countries.
However, we underscore the need of the establishment of a verification mechanism of the BWC in order to insure that States Parties obligations are fulfilled, and to face the threat of bioterrorism.

Mr. Chair,

Concerning the *conventional weapons*, my delegation would like to stress that illicit trade of small arms and light weapons (SALW) continue to threaten peace and stability in many countries and regions, particularly in North Africa and Sahel regions. This illicit trade is a source of supply to terrorist groups and organized crime, and is therefore an ongoing concern to my country. On the basis of its national experience, Algeria reaffirms that the UN Programme of Action (UN-PoA) and the International Tracing Instrument are more than ever of utmost relevance. We continue to emphasize the importance of their full, balanced, and effective implementation. We wish also to stress that international cooperation and assistance are essential for the implementation of those two instruments.

Building on the successful conclusion of the Sixth Biennial Meeting of States on the implementation of the UN-PoA, our delegation looks forward to further actions to eliminate the illicit trade in small arms and light weapons in advance of the holding of the 3rd Review Conference in 2018. Therefore in this context, we stress the importance of submitting the national reports regularly, in order to assess both the progress made and the remaining challenges on eradicating the SALW. For its part, my country has regularly submitted its national reports in view of the implementation of these two instruments.

Moreover, since its accession to the Convention on the Prohibition of Antipersonnel Mines, Algeria has been sparing no effort to fulfill its obligations and has worked tirelessly for achieving the noble objectives set 20 years ago by the States Parties to the Convention. In this respect, we take this opportunity to announce that Algeria’s efforts were crowned by: -the finalization, this year, of the destruction of its remaining stockpile of anti-personnel mines; and -the completion of humanitarian demining operations by more than 8.8 million mines.

Mr. Chair,

Regarding the UN *multilateral disarmament machinery*, Algeria considers the lack of political will is clearly the reason of the continuing deadlock of the CD (Conference on Disarmament) and obviously this is another source of frustration and disappointment. In this regard, Algeria reaffirms the importance of the CD as the sole multilateral negotiating body for disarmament, and calls upon the CD to agree on a balanced and comprehensive program of work.

Furthermore, my country reaffirms the importance and relevance of the UNDC, as the sole specialized and a universal deliberative body within the UN multilateral disarmament machinery, to consider various problems in the field of disarmament and joins other Member States in welcoming the adoption, this year, by consensus of the recommendations on the “Practical confidence-building measures in the field of conventional weapons”. We call upon all Member States to demonstrate the necessary political will and flexibility in order to allow also this body to achieve a consensus on “Recommendations for achieving the objective of nuclear disarmament and non-proliferation of nuclear weapons” next year.
Likewise, our delegation is of the view of the importance of the convening of the Fourth Special Session of the General Assembly (SSOD-IV) in order to review thoroughly all disarmament issues, and we welcome the successful convening of substantive sessions in 2016 and 2017 of the open-ended working group on the SSOD-IV, which agreed on the objectives and agenda of the SSOD-IV.

Finally, we view the First Committee as an essential component of the UN Disarmament machinery and we remain committed to working actively and constructively during this session.

In this context, Algeria will submit its annual draft resolution on “Strengthening of security and cooperation in the Mediterranean region” in the course of our meetings for which, we seek the support of all delegations.

I thank you for your kind attention.