

**FIRST COMMITTEE THEMATIC DEBATE:
DISARMAMENT MACHINERY**

STATEMENT

BY

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TO THE UNITED NATIONS**

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CHECK AGAINST DELIVERY

Mr Chairman,

For Liechtenstein, a small States without armed forces, the maintenance of an effective disarmament machinery is a matter of national security, but also an issue that has a strong and direct impact on the overall purposes of the United Nations. National security is, of course, affected by a multitude of factors, but among these is the ability of the international system to make real advances in the area of disarmament. We therefore favor the immediate start of negotiations in the Conference on Disarmament (CD) on a Fissile Material Cut-off Treaty and support the long-term goal of a Nuclear Weapons Convention.

We remain concerned, however, that the CD's last substantive negotiations have become a subject contemplated by historians rather than diplomats. This state of affairs puts into question the entire mandate of the CD. Sometimes it is necessary for the UN membership to entrust certain responsibilities to a body composed of a limited number of states, as was done with the CD. However, this also creates an enduring burden of justification vis-à-vis the supervising body, in this case the General Assembly (GA). For the past fourteen years, the CD has not met that burden of justification. While we applaud the major disarmament successes of recent years – the Anti-Personnel Landmine Ban Treaty and the Convention on Cluster Munitions, to name but two – we note that these took place outside the framework of the United Nations and its single multilateral disarmament negotiation forum, the CD. To our mind, this challenges the CD's very reason to exist. The situation in 2009, where the Conference was able to agree on a Programme of Work – considered a breakthrough at the time – but was unable to implement it, makes it plain that the time has come to have a debate about the future of the CD, and indeed, the entirety of the UN disarmament machinery.

The only place to have such a debate, which affects the national security of all Member States, is in the GA. We are therefore pleased to cosponsor the draft resolution entitled Follow-up to the High-level Meeting held on 24 September 2010 – Revitalizing the Work

of the Conference on Disarmament and Taking Forward Multilateral Disarmament Negotiations. We contributed a written statement to the Secretary-General's High-Level Meeting on the Revitalisation of the Conference on Disarmament, and see this meeting as the first step of a process leading to the revitalisation and reform of the Conference. While we were ready to have a substantive discussion on this topic at the present session of the First Committee, we welcome, as a compromise, the resolution's intention to inscribe a topic on the follow-up of the High-Level Meeting on the agenda of the 66th General Assembly. We sincerely hope that this resolution will find the widest possible support.

I thank you.