

DENMARK

68th Session of the United Nations General Assembly.

First Committee Thematic Debate on Other Disarmament Measures, Non-Proliferation and Arms Control.

30 October 2013, New York

Statement by H.E., Ambassador Uffe A. Balslev,
Undersecretary for Disarmament, Non-Proliferation and Arms Control

Thank you, Mr Chairman,

Let me limit myself to one issue, namely **gender and disarmament**.

It is widely recognized that sexual and gender-based violence carries responsibility for an unacceptably high share of human suffering in this world, not least of the suffering caused by illicit and unregulated arms trade. It was most recently confirmed in Security Council resolution 2117 that underline how the illicit transfer, destabilizing accumulation and misuse of small arms and light weapons have a disproportionate impact on violence perpetrated against women and girls, and exacerbates sexual and gender-based violence. The 2012 Review Conference of the UN Programme of Action on small arms and light weapons similarly expressed concern about the negative impact of the illicit trade of small arms and

light weapons on women and underscored the need for further integration of the role of women into efforts to combat and eradicate the illicit trade in small arms.

Further it was essential that we gave the issue of gender-based violence such a prominent place in the Arms Trade Treaty, having it reflected both in the preamble and in the operative article 7.4. Accordingly each exporting State Party, when assessing risks related to an export authorization, shall take into account the risk of the conventional arms being used to commit or facilitate serious acts of gender-based violence or serious acts of violence against women and children.

Also in this regard, the ATT represents a huge step forward and this should have been properly reflected in several of the resolutions on conventional disarmament we discussed in the previous cluster. This also goes for resolution L.7 on Women, Disarmament and Non-Proliferation in this cluster, which we nevertheless co-sponsor. We regret that it has not been the case and we must see how we can do better next year.

Recent deliberations on the issue elsewhere in the UN system, such as in the Agreed Conclusions of the 57th Commission on the Status of Women this spring and Security Council Resolution 2106, are important and should form basis for the mainstreaming of gender awareness also into the work of this committee. We should affirm the importance for our work of women's political, social and economic empowerment, of gender equality, and emphasize the important role that can be played by women, civil society, including women's organizations, and formal and informal community leaders in the prevention and reduction of armed

violence and armed conflict, and in promoting disarmament, non-proliferation and arms control.

It is our hope that we have put those years behind us where the gender perspective was largely absent from disarmament, arms control and non-proliferation processes. Men and women are affected differently by weapons and armed conflict and their contribution to disarmament efforts will be different and complementary. UN Security Council resolution 1325 recognizes this and obliges us to take it into account.

There may be small pockets of opinion in this committee who still argue that these issues belong elsewhere and are not part of the core occupation of the United Nations Committee responsible for Disarmament and International Security. They must have been living on Mars. Nothing could be more wrong. It is about time it is reflected in our work.

Thank you, Mr Chairman.