



MALDIVES

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Statement by His Excellency Mr Abdul Ghafoor Mohamed Permanent Representative of the Republic of Maldives on Disarmament and International Security (First Committee), 12 October 2009, New York

Mr Chairman,

Let me take by congratulating you and other members of your bureau, on your election to chair the proceedings of this Committee.

Allow me also, to recognize and appreciate the work carried out by Ambassador Sergio Duarte, in his capacity as the High Representative for Disarmament Affairs.

My delegation aligns itself with the statement made by Indonesia, on behalf of the Non-Aligned Movement.

Mr Chairman,

The Maldives reaffirms its belief that international efforts on disarmament and non-proliferation should always remain the most important priority on the international agenda. We strongly believe, that the ultimate objective of such efforts should focus on the collective realisation of a world free of nuclear and other weapons of mass destruction.

In this regard, we warmly welcome the ongoing negotiations between the United States and the Russian Federation, in working to replace the Strategic Arms Reduction Treaty (START) with a new binding agreement to reduce and limit strategic offensive arms. We consider this a very positive development given the impasse faced by the international community on disarmament efforts today.

The Maldives was encouraged by the outcome of the Special Session of the Security Council on Nuclear Disarmament and Non-Proliferation, which was held last month and we call on Nuclear Weapon States to maintain the ongoing momentum, to reduce existing stockpiles and strengthen safeguard mechanisms to stop the spread of radioactive and other fissile material.

Mr. Chairman,

Since the Maldives became a member of the United Nations, we have always tried to impress upon the international community on the various vulnerabilities facing small

states like ours. Small states often do not have the resources nor the means to defend themselves from the emerging threats, including the many and varied forms of international terrorism and activities of organized crime. The continued scourge of terrorism is particularly alarming when seen in the context of the spread of nuclear arms and other weapons of mass destruction. With our collective efforts, the international community must ensure that such a frightening and very real possibility do not materialise.

Some of today's organized crime and terrorist organizations indeed, have at their disposal far greater resources and means than some of the small states of this organization. Small Arms and Light Weapons, today provides these non-state entities with the lethality they require to cause chaos in countries and destabilize whole regions. The international community must step up its efforts in strengthening effective arms control mechanisms to ensure that the spread of SALW is stopped completely. In this regard, my delegation supports the efforts of the Open-Ended Working Group on the arms trade treaty, established pursuant to Resolution 63/240. We believe that the responsible regulation and control of arms, would provide a comprehensive legal framework to ensure that diversion of conventional arms, and SALW does not take place.

We fully support the current efforts being undertaken to establish nuclear weapons free zones and zones of peace, in strengthening stability and thriving towards greater prosperity, in a world free from the threat of nuclear annihilation. We underline the importance of confidence building measures, both at regional and sub-regional levels, as fundamental toward establishing such zones.

Mr Chairman,

Since the adoption of the new Constitution last year, the formulation of policies and statutes governing the control and movement of arms are being put in place to ensure that our international obligations including measures relating to the establishment of national safeguards towards disarmament and non-proliferation are addressed and fully complied. In this regard we are happy to report that new legislation to further strengthen the domestic counter-terrorism machinery is being introduced with a greater emphasis on law enforcement and legal capacity building to reflect our political will to effectively and responsibly exercise these new laws, as and when necessary.

Mr Chairman,

The Maldives remains committed to the vision of a world without nuclear weapons. We are now party to the major disarmament treaties and conventions including the Non-Proliferation Treaty, the Comprehensive Nuclear Test Ban Treaty, the Chemical Weapons Convention and the Biological Weapons Convention. Our participation in these conventions clearly signifies our unequivocal support to the twin pillars of international disarmament and non-proliferation of weapons of mass destruction.

Thank you, Mr Chairman.