



INTER-PARLIAMENTARY UNION

First Committee -General debate **on all disarmament and international security agenda items**

STATEMENT by Ambassador Anda Filip, Permanent Observer of the IPU
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Mr. Chairman,

Please allow me to begin by congratulating you and your Bureau upon your election to lead the work of the First Committee during this 64th session of the General Assembly – I wish you full success in discharging this important function, and would like to assure you of the full support of the IPU throughout the process.

I would like to take this opportunity to refer to issue of nuclear disarmament and non-proliferation, from the perspective of the efforts undertaken more recently by the Inter-Parliamentary Union and its member parliaments in this field.

Member States may recall that the 2007 Parliamentary Hearing at the United Nations dealt with the issue of the rule of law in international relations, with one of its sessions dedicated to the implementation of key international commitments in the area of disarmament & non-proliferation. That panel was addressed by the UN Deputy High Representative for Disarmament, the Executive Secretary of the CTBTO, the President of the Global Security Institute, the Chair of the Mexican Senate Foreign Relations Committee, and the Chairman of Security Council 1540 Committee, and was followed by a substantive exchange of views among the participating legislators (some 200 MPs from over 70 countries). Much of the discussion focused on the nuclear predicament and the need to mobilize political leadership and a commitment to effectively deal with it – this was an issue, many parliamentarians felt, that simply could not wait much longer.

Based on the outcome of that Annual Hearing, IPU members decided that this issue warranted a more serious examination, including within parliaments themselves, and therefore they introduced the issue on their formal agenda of work. The IPU Committee on Peace & International Security was mandated to look into the issue of Advancing nuclear non-proliferation and disarmament and securing the entry into force of the comprehensive nuclear-test-ban treaty: the role of parliaments.

Two prominent legislators from Australia and Zambia were designated as rapporteurs, and their substantive Report and draft Resolution were circulated for consideration by the member parliaments of the IPU. We also benefitted from the expertise of the United Nations and the support of other parliamentary organizations, in particular the network of Parliamentarians for Nuclear Non-proliferation and Disarmament. After a rigorous process of examination, debate and negotiation, a Parliamentary Resolution was adopted by consensus by the IPU member parliaments, in April of this year.

That text (<http://www.ipu.org/conf-e/120/120-1.htm>) has been circulated in the General Assembly and in this Committee under the respective agenda item, so I do not propose to dwell too much on its content. I would note, however, that it carries a strong political message and serves as a call for action, by parliaments & parliamentarians from around the world, on a number of fronts:

- ensuring universal ratification of the CTBT,
- strengthening the NPT regime and achieving universal accession therein,
- promoting the UN Secretary-General's five-point plan for nuclear disarmament,
- supporting a number of concurrent steps such as reductions in both nuclear stockpiles and in the operational status of nuclear weapons, establishment of additional nuclear-weapon-free zones (in particular in the Middle East) and the commencement of negotiations on a fissile materials treaty as well as on a comprehensive Nuclear Weapons Convention.

During the deliberations on the draft Resolution, several parliaments underscored the type of activities they are already undertaking to advance the nuclear disarmament and non-proliferation agenda:

- seeking swift ratification of relevant international treaties and protocols,
- urging their executives to sign international agreements to which their countries are not yet a party,
- introducing motions in parliament for general or extended debates,
- adopting resolutions in parliament on very specific issues – such as resolutions calling for the dismantlement of military bases with nuclear weapons from the territory of their country,
- establishing new bodies within Parliament, such as sub-Committees, Caucuses or All-Party Groups, to deal specifically with matters relating to nuclear disarmament and non-proliferation,
- exercising their powers of oversight and reviewing the extent to which their governments are implementing agreed commitments,
- improving parliamentary mechanisms to more rigorously scrutinize military budgets and procurement programmes, and even introducing and amending legislation that allocates funding to nuclear disarmament and non-proliferation initiatives.

In practical terms, allow me to provide just a few of the examples brought forward by participating legislators during our last IPU Assembly, which also saw the adoption of the said Resolution. On this occasion, MPs from Angola, China and Pakistan shared their experiences in the adoption of national laws regulating the use, transport and transfer of nuclear technologies and materials according to international standards. Legislators from Mongolia and New Zealand provided examples of legislation which criminalizes nuclear weapons activities.

The parliament of Norway explained how it was able to develop legislation which divests government pension funds from corporations involved in the production of nuclear weapons and their delivery systems. MPs from South Korea referred to their efforts of parliamentary diplomacy, seeking to engage in dialogue with legislators from North Korea. The Chair of the Sub-Committee on Disarmament, Arms Control and Non-proliferation in the German Bundestag convened a hearing in Parliament on the need for a Nuclear Weapons Convention.

At the regional level, the Namibian parliament was recently involved in convening a regional workshop for the member states of the Southern African Development Community on the Comprehensive Test-Ban Treaty, and it remains committed to follow-up on these efforts. From Australia, we heard about how there is scope for its parliament to do more, in light of its strong linkages in Asia, to promote non-proliferation and disarmament, both in terms of support for treaties from countries in the region and of norms of nuclear restraint. For example, it was noted that there is particular benefit in Australian parliamentarians becoming more engaged with their counterparts in India on non-proliferation issues.

In terms of specific efforts to ensure the entry into force of the CTBT, we learned about how the collaborative efforts among the parliaments of Costa Rica and Austria, through the CTBTO Preparatory commission and the Article XIV Conference, are in fact contributing to accelerating the ratification process in Latin America and the Caribbean. MPs from the nine Annex 2 states that have not yet ratified the CTBT came forward to address their concerns but also the avenues they are willing to explore. Clearly this is a discussion that needs to continue with renewed energy, and clearly, the value of inter-parliamentary exchange & cooperation cannot be underestimated here.

We believe that for all of the reasons cited by previous speakers in this Committee, the international community now has a unique window of opportunity to make real progress towards achieving the ideal of citizens around the globe, that of a nuclear-weapons-free world. We need to seize the moment. We know that building political will is key, and we know that parliaments and parliamentarians are a very important part of the solution. The IPU is hence committed to play its role in helping move this crucial process forward.

I thank you for your attention.