



INTER-PARLIAMENTARY UNION

First Committee: General debate

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 65th session of the General Assembly. We would like to assure you of our full support as you discharge this important function.

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

Nuclear disarmament and non-proliferation is an area where in general parliaments, as institutions, have not played a very prominent role. However, this situation is changing and more parliaments are now exercising a more thorough examination and oversight of national policies in the areas of defence, security and disarmament. Moreover, there is a growing recognition of the fact that, in order to build the political will and commitment needed to advance on nuclear disarmament, it is crucial to engage with legislators and to integrate their perspectives into national and international processes.

Parliamentarians around the world are keeping up with this challenge. One tool that is serving us well is the IPU political resolution, adopted by consensus in April 2009 on *Advancing nuclear non-proliferation and disarmament and securing the early entry into force of the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty*. This resolution, which was circulated in the UN General Assembly and which we had the chance to refer to during the First Committee session last year, includes some practical recommendations on what parliaments can do to ensure universal ratification of the CTBT, promote the UN Secretary-General's five-point plan for nuclear disarmament and support a number of concurrent steps such as reductions in nuclear stockpiles, establishment of nuclear-weapons-free zones, and the start of negotiations on a fissile materials treaty.

We are in the process of taking stock and assessing the various parliamentary initiatives in support of some of the resolution's main recommendations. Our report is in its preliminary stages; however some very interesting information has already been shared by a number of member parliaments.

Just to mention a few examples: the parliaments of Angola, China and Pakistan have adopted national laws regulating the use, transport and transfer of nuclear technologies and materials according to international standards. The parliaments of Mongolia and New Zealand have enacted legislation which criminalizes nuclear weapons activities, and the parliament of Norway has developed legislation that divests government pension funds from

corporations involved in the production of nuclear weapons and their delivery systems. The examples continue.

During the NPT Review Conference here in New York in May, several dozen legislators joined their national delegations to follow the proceedings. During the first week of high-level debates, the IPU organized two parliamentary events, in close cooperation with Parliamentarians for Nuclear Non-Proliferation and Disarmament (PNND), a partner whose work we greatly value. One of these featured the UN Secretary-General himself as a keynote speaker, and the MPs were able to share some of their own perspectives and discuss actions that could help build political momentum for progress in this area. The lawmakers reported that parliamentary resolutions supporting the Secretary-General's five-point plan and/or the start of negotiations on a nuclear weapons convention had been adopted in a number of parliaments, including those of Austria, Bangladesh, Costa Rica, Germany, Italy, New Zealand, Norway and the European Parliament, as well as introduced in other parliaments such as those of France, the United Kingdom and the United States. Several other parliaments were preparing to follow suit.

The main messages that emerged from these parliamentary events include:

- Politicians and diplomats should not underestimate the growing momentum towards nuclear disarmament - and they should not hesitate to reach towards a historical breakthrough;
- Non-proliferation steps, such as nuclear-weapons-free zones, can play a key role in developing the institutional and technical components for a nuclear-weapons-free world;
- Parliamentarians from countries in extended nuclear deterrence relationships can support nuclear disarmament through phasing out the role of nuclear weapons in their security doctrines;
- Disarmament and peace education are vital to build political constituencies to support action by parliaments and governments for nuclear disarmament;
- and lastly, collaboration between legislators, governments and civil society is required to ensure success, and that this needed to be pursued with greater vigour.

Mr. Chairman,

The urgent need for action towards a nuclear disarmament was stressed most recently and at a very high level, on the occasion of the Third World Conference of Speakers of Parliaments. In the ensuing Summit Declaration, which focuses on the enhancement of global democratic accountability for the common good, parliamentary leaders from all over the world pledged their commitment and support for the efforts under way towards a nuclear-weapon-free world.

At last week's 123rd IPU Assembly in Geneva, consultations were held with multi-party parliamentary delegations from several countries that have signed the CTBT and where ratification should not be terribly problematic. We are hopeful that this enhanced awareness around the importance of the CTBT can help prompt further progress towards the entry into force of this key international instrument.

As far as the IPU is concerned, we are committed to continuing to work closely with member parliaments and partners in helping advance the disarmament and non-proliferation agenda.

I thank you for your attention.