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STATEMENT

BY

H.E. MR CARLOS MIRANDA

AMBASSADOR OF SPAIN

DELEGATE TO THE CONFERENCE ON DISARMAMENT

ON BEHALF OF THE EUROPEAN UNION

GENEVA, 14 FEBRUARY 2002

INTERVENCIÓN

DEL

EXCMO. SR. D. CARLOS MIRANDA

EMBAJADOR DE ESPAÑA

DELEGADO EN LA CONFERENCIA DE DESARME

EN NOMBRE DE LA UNIÓN EUROPEA

GINEBRA, EL 14 DE FEBRERO DE 2002

Mr. President,

I have the honour to take the floor today on behalf of the European Union. Furthermore, the countries of central and eastern Europe associated to the European Union - Bulgaria, the Czech Republic, Estonia, Hungary, Latvia, Lithuania, Poland, Romania, Slovakia, Slovenia - and Cyprus and Malta, also associated to the European Union, align themselves to this statement.

Mr President,

It is a great pleasure for me to see you in the important office of President of the Conference on Disarmament. I am convinced that the Conference on Disarmament will greatly benefit from your long experience and diplomatic skills in the difficult situation it faces. Let me also extend the greetings of the European Union to the Secretary-General of the Conference, Mr Petrovsky, and to our Deputy Secretary-General of the Conference on Disarmament, Mr Roman-Morey.

Mr. President,

Few events have galvanised the international system into action so completely in so short a time as the horrific attacks of 11 September. At their extraordinary meeting in Brussels on 21 September, the Heads of State and Government of the European Union underscored their determination to act in concert in all circumstances and agreed a coordinated and comprehensive Action Plan to combat terrorism, covering a wide range of measures. In conformity with that Action Plan the Council of the European Union decided to launch a Targeted Initiative to respond effectively to the international threat of terrorism, focusing on the following elements:

- the strengthening of the relevant multilateral instruments in the field of non-proliferation, disarmament and arms control with a view to promoting their universalisation and ensuring their effective implementation;
- the definition of concrete measures to strengthen export controls to prevent terrorist groups and States which harbour them from acquiring materials relative to weapons of mass destruction;
- international cooperation, in particular the protection and assistance against the use, or threat of use, of chemical and biological weapons as well as measures to maintain physical control of nuclear material worldwide;
- the enhancement of the political dialogue with third countries in the field of non-proliferation, arms control and disarmament.

Indeed, as was stated by the Foreign Ministers of the European Union on 10th December, "non-proliferation, disarmament and arms control remain an indispensable element of cooperative security between States. They can also make an essential contribution in the global fight against terrorism by reducing the risk of non-State actors gaining access to weapons of mass destruction, radioactive materials and means of delivery as well as by preventing the spread of conventional weapons".

Mr. President,

The international community as a whole is being challenged by the risks brought about by the proliferation of weapons of mass destruction and their means of delivery. Our security and stability, both globally and regionally, are being threatened by such actions. The terrorist attacks of September 11 have given an even greater sense of urgency to the common efforts required from all States to agree collectively to new instruments and mechanisms to ensure mutual security.

But, in this changing global security environment, for the European Union the strengthening of international norms and political instruments to prevent the proliferation of weapons of mass destruction and their means of delivery is a main priority and is committed to the reinforcement of disarmament and non proliferation multilateral instruments.

Despite some unfortunate setbacks, like for instance regarding the CTBT or the BTWC, the year 2001 was not a uniformly dismal year for efforts in disarmament and non-proliferation. Multilateral work was successfully conducted in other areas like, inter alia, the UN Conference on Small Arms and Light Weapons, the 3rd Conference of States Parties of the Mine-Ban Treaty in Managua and the II Review Conference of the CCW. We welcome the entry into force of the Open Skies Treaty on January 1st 2002.

Moreover, the meeting in Paris, on the 7th and 8th February, on the International Code of Conduct against missile proliferation, has been productive and promising. The European Union intends to go on playing a dynamic role in the continuation of this process.

The European Union welcomes the Joint Statement by the Presidents of the USA and the Russian Federation on a new relationship between their two countries for the 21st century, and takes note of their commitment to the Biological and Chemical Conventions, as well as to the strengthening of the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty. We look forward to fully working with them and with other States, in order to achieve those goals, especially during the NPT Preparatory Committee and the reconvening of the BTWC Review Conference. We welcome the intention of the US and the Russian Federation governments to formalize through negotiations in the coming months an

agreement on the reduction of nuclear offensive weapons that preserves the verification and transparency procedures which exist in current agreements. We are also convinced that this new relationship, as well as the continuing consultations with other countries, will build momentum for compromise in these and other multilateral regimes and fora in disarmament and non-proliferation.

The European Union wishes to underscore the importance and urgency of an early entry into force of the CTBT and calls upon all States who have as yet not done so to adhere to the Treaty without delay and unconditionally, especially those in the list of 44 States whose ratification is indispensable.

Mr President,

The year 2001 witnessed a shock in international relations at a planetary scale and still; as of today, the Conference on Disarmament is unable to effectively launch its work. While paying tribute to all your predecessors at the Chair, and in particular to Ambassador Reyes for his success in bringing forward an agreement on a non-contested issue of our Agenda, the European Union can only deeply regret this situation.

The European Union stresses, once more, its commitment to the full implementation of the decisions and resolution adopted at the 1995 NPT review and extension conference and the 2000 NPT review conference final document. In the context of the Conference on Disarmament, this refers especially to two important practical steps agreed by all States Parties to the NPT - i.e. the negotiations on a fissile material cut-off treaty and the establishment of an appropriate subsidiary body with a mandate to deal with nuclear disarmament. This undertaking should pave the way for an agreement on the Conference on Disarmament's programme of work.

Mr. President,

The Conference on Disarmament is the sole multilateral forum at the disposal of the international community for disarmament negotiations. It decided to start, and actually started, in 1998, negotiations on a non-discriminatory, multilateral and internationally and effectively verifiable treaty banning the production of fissile material for nuclear weapons or other nuclear explosive devices in accordance with the statement of the Special Coordinator in 1995 and the mandate contained therein, taking into account both nuclear disarmament and nuclear non-proliferation objectives. Together with the early entry into force of the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty, the immediate commencement of the FMCT negotiation constitutes the next essential step in nuclear disarmament and non-proliferation.

The necessity of the immediate start of such a negotiation was clearly stated in the Decision on Principles and Objectives for nuclear non-proliferation and disarmament agreed by the 1995 NPT review and extension conference and reaffirmed in the Final Document of the 2000 NPT review conference, and also in resolutions adopted by consensus by the United Nations General Assembly later in the year and in 2001. In spite of the delays, the European Union continues to attach the utmost importance to the start of the negotiation of such a treaty during this year's session of the Conference on Disarmament, and to its rapid conclusion.

Mr President,

The Conference on Disarmament cannot remain deaf to the legitimate expectations of the international community. We cannot but acknowledge that some items of the Conference on Disarmament Agenda have been taken up in other fora. The European Union hopes the Conference on Disarmament will rise to the challenge and reach an agreement on its Programme of Work, and address all the substantive issues contained therein.

The success of this endeavour requires that the security concerns of all States be taken into account. The immediate launch of the FMCT negotiations as well as dealing with both nuclear disarmament, and the prevention of an arms race in outer space as contained in UNGA resolution 56/23, within subsidiary bodies whose mandates shall need to be both pragmatic and substantial in order to be accepted by all - these three parts together constitute the basis today for an agreement to begin our work. The European Union is convinced that such an agreement is within our grasp.

Mr President,

Throughout the sessions of previous years, the European Union assisted and supported the efforts of the successive Presidents of the Conference, including Ambassador Kreid and Ambassador Lint. Their work has been refined over the months and blended into Conference on Disarmament document 1624 which has come to be known as the "Amorim proposal". This proposal contains in the view of the European Union the elements for a rapid agreement, if all members of the Conference display a spirit of openness and pragmatism. We are also convinced that other delegations and groups of countries share this assessment of the situation, which would allow the President to arrive at a solution.

Mr. President,

There is no need today to detail the views of the European Union on the other items of the Conference on Disarmament agenda that are included in document 1624. We support the start of work on those too, and we will come back to outline our positions in relation to them, as soon as the Conference gets started on substantive work. Nevertheless, we would like to thank wholeheartedly all three Special Coordinators on procedural issues - Ambassador Seibert of Germany, Ambassador Kariyawasam of Sri Lanka and Ambassador Draganov and Mr. Peter Kolarov of Bulgaria - for their dedication and their very valuable contribution to our work. The European Union favours the renewal, as early as possible, of the mandates of the three Special Coordinators this annual session and looks forward to assisting them in fulfilling their tasks in an efficient manner.

Let me add, and recall, that the European Union is firmly committed to the continuation of the enlargement process of the Conference on Disarmament. We are particularly attached to the prospective Conference on Disarmament memberships of those member States of the European Union which are not yet members of the Conference. The European Union also supports the candidacies of the Associated countries who have expressed their wish to become members of this body.

Mr President,

The European Union wishes to restate its commitment to multilateralism. Once more, we want to emphasize, as we all did in UNGA resolution 56/24T, that it is a core principle in negotiations in the area of disarmament and non-proliferation with a view to maintaining and strengthening universal norms and enlarging their scope. The persisting stalemate within the Conference thus contributes to a weakening of the international regime for disarmament and non-proliferation.

The Secretary-General of the United Nations and the United Nations General Assembly have urged us to agree on a programme of work. The European Union pledges its strong support to you and your successors with a view to bringing the Conference on Disarmament back to the leading role it is designed to play in this ever changing world.

Thank you, Mr President.