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Finland's EU Presidency

United Nations General Assembly
61st Session
First Committee

Explanation of Vote by
Ambassador Kari Kahiluoto, Finland,
on behalf of the European Union

On the draft resolution on
"Risk of Nuclear Proliferation in the Middle East"

New York, 23 October 2006

Madam Chair,

I am speaking on behalf of the European Union on draft resolution L.2 entitled 'Risk of nuclear proliferation in the Middle East.' The Acceding Countries Bulgaria and Romania, the Candidate Countries Turkey, Croatia* and the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia*, the Countries of the Stabilisation and Association Process and potential candidates Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Serbia, and the EFTA countries Iceland ja Norway, members of the European Economic Area, align themselves with this declaration.

The European Union supports the objective that the Middle East becomes a zone free of all WMD, but we are concerned that this draft resolution does not cover some relevant recent developments with respect to nuclear proliferation in the region.

Madam Chair,

The EU will vote in favour of this draft resolution and calls on all States in the region to adhere to the NPT as non-nuclear-weapon States. We also call on all States in the region that have not yet done so to conclude the Comprehensive Safeguards Agreement and to sign and ratify the Additional Protocol.

The EU shares the concern over Iran's nuclear programme expressed by the UN Security Council and the IAEA Board of Governors. Iran's non-compliance with its Safeguards obligations and Security Council demands raises serious questions and is not compatible with the international non-proliferation regime. It is of critical importance not only for all States in the Middle East to accede to relevant non-proliferation treaties and conventions, but also that all parties to the treaties and conventions implement fully their obligations under these instruments.

The EU fully supports UN Security Council Resolution 1696, which, inter alia, made it mandatory for Iran to suspend all enrichment-related and reprocessing activities including research and development, to be verified by the IAEA. Suspension is no longer a voluntary confidence-building measure, but an international obligation. The UN Security Council also called upon Iran to act in accordance with the Additional Protocol and to implement without delay all transparency measures as the IAEA may request in support of its ongoing investigations.

The EU deeply regrets that, as demonstrated by the report of the IAEA Director General, Iran has not fulfilled the obligations established by the UN Security Council Resolution, nor taken the steps required by the IAEA Board of Governors. The EU reiterates its view that prompt and full Iranian

* Croatia and the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia continue to be part of the Stabilisation and Association Process.

compliance with the relevant international obligations and other requirements would facilitate negotiations for a diplomatic solution. We recall the statement of the Council of the EU on 17 July 2006 that if Iran did not comply with the Security Council's requirements, the EU would work for the adoption of measures under Article 41 of the UN Charter. The EU also recalls that in Resolution 1696 the Security Council expressed its intention to adopt appropriate measures under Article 41 if Iran did not comply. Accordingly, the EU believes that Iran's continuation of enrichment related activities has left the EU no choice but to support consultations on such measures. The EU notes that the door to negotiations nevertheless remains open. We reaffirm our commitment to a negotiated solution, and that such a solution would contribute to the development of the EU's relations with Iran. We urge Iran to take the positive path on offer.

Thank you, Madam Chair.