

*Check against
dehvoing*

Intervention of the Syrian Arab Republic 1st Session of the IGWG on the Right to Peace.

18 - 21 February 2013

I would like to begin by congratulating you Mr. Chairman on assuming the leadership of this intergovernmental working group which was created by the Human Rights Council in recognition of the importance of the Right to Peace; a right we all agree is not only a basic and necessary right, but is in fact inseparable from the most fundamental right, which is the right to life.

It is this reality that pressed the Council, prompted by subsequent resolutions and supported by the vast majority of the international community, to seek the adoption of a declaration that would guarantee the Right to Peace; and my government joins this great majority of countries in actively negotiating a viable and effective ~~draft~~ *declaration* that serves humanity.

It remains regrettable that a few countries, mainly countries that promote the exact opposite of peace, refuse to join this consensus and continue to oppose this endeavor. This unfortunate fact shall not prevent us from advancing in our negotiations in order to fulfill the mandate of this group and generate a comprehensive draft declaration with the hope of adopting it as soon as possible.

In this context, we believe that the draft declaration must be based on the obligation of all states to actively promote the implementation of the provisions of the Right to Peace. This demands policies that strive to eliminate the threat of war, most importantly nuclear warfare, and the renunciation of the threat of the use of force as a means of foreign policy or a way to settle international disputes. This Declaration must reflect the full respect of the UN Charter and its principles as well as the fundamental freedoms and rights, including the right to development and the right of peoples for self-determination.

Having carefully reviewed the draft text prepared the Advisory Committee we would like to make the following initial comments:

- The text prepared by the Advisory Committee is very long, encompassing concepts and ideas that do not necessarily serve the objective of the Human Rights Council's decisions in this regard. In fact these ideas lie clearly beyond the scope of its mandate and therefore we must be very careful in addressing them in this draft. They include the exploration of the topics of peacekeeping and its relation to the protection of civilians and so-called democratic oversight of military establishments and its budgets.

- The Committee's text needs to conform to the principles of international law and cannot allow for misinterpretation of fundamental principles, including concepts and definitions of the use of force and peacekeeping, as prescribed in the UN Charter. It also must not address, as given, other concepts and ideas that remain vague, ambiguous and undefined such as "human security" and "responsibility to protect", as well ^{as} other concepts that do not enjoy full consensus from the international community including certain aspects of the concepts of refugees and migration, peacekeeping, conscientious objection to military service, among others.
- The draft text also displays weakness when it comes to very important issues that constitute real obstacles to the Right to Peace, including the issues of private military and security companies, the right to development, environment, as well as peace education and training.
- This meeting must address these shortcomings along with several others that we can discuss in detail at a later stage.

Thank you Mr. Chairman.