STATEMENT BY

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AT
UNITED NATIONS GENERAL ASSEMBLY
FIFTY-NINTH SESSION

FIRST COMMITTEE GENERAL DEBATE

New York,
October 11, 2004

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Mr. Chairman,
My delegation wishes to join others who have spoken before us in congratulating you and members of your Bureau upon election to preside over the work of this Committee during this General Assembly session. We have no doubt that under your guidance the Committee will be able to effectively accomplish its work. We also extend our appreciation to Ambassador Jarno Sarvea for his able stewardship of the Committee during the last General Assembly session. We would equally wish to express our thanks to Ambassador Nobuyasu Abe, Under-Secretary General for Disarmament Affairs, for his thoughtful remarks at the opening of the Committee's deliberations.

Mr. Chairman,
The threat posed by Weapons of Mass Destruction (WMD), particularly nuclear weapons, remains the greatest challenge to international peace and security. We are disheartened by the continuing lack of tangible progress in the area of nuclear non-proliferation and disarmament. The failure of the Third Prepcom for the 2005 NPT Review Conference to agree on substantive recommendations is indicative of the big task that still remains to be accomplished in order to advance the agenda of nuclear non-proliferation and disarmament. We hope that the Review Conference will reiterate and underline the umbilical link between non-proliferation and disarmament.

Mr. Chairman,
The Comprehensive Nuclear Test-Ban Treaty (CTBT) is still not in force due to the non-ratification by States that are necessary to operationalize it. My delegation considers that this Treaty is a vital instrument in the nuclear non-proliferation arsenal and we call upon the concerned states to immediately ratify it. In the meantime, we urge the maintenance of the moratorium on nuclear tests.

Mr. Chairman,
Terrorism in its varied forms continues to take its horrific toll in loss of life, maiming and destruction of property across the world. It is the scourge of our time. It is, therefore, more urgent than ever before that Weapons of Mass Destruction should be eliminated before they fall into the hands of mindless terrorists who have, by their actions, demonstrated that they would use them to devastating effect. My delegation, therefore, calls upon all states to ratify or, if they have not yet done so, to accede to the Chemical Weapons Convention (CWC) and the Biological Weapons Convention (BWC) in order to bring them into universal application.
Mr. Chairman,

In the area of conventional weapons, Uganda wishes to underline the devastating effects of the inundation of small arms and light weapons on the political, economic and social fabric of countries across the globe, particularly developing countries. These weapons have wrought havoc and mayhem through their easy availability and indiscriminate use. We, therefore, welcome the work that continues to be carried out with a view towards the prevention, combat and eradication of illicit trade in these weapons. In particular, we welcome the commencement earlier this year of the deliberations of the Open-Ended Working Group on Tracing Illicit Small Arms and Light Weapons. We believe that the outcome of this Working Group’s work will contribute substantially to the alleviation of the spread of these weapons.

In this regard, let me mention the forthcoming International Conference on the Great Lakes Region scheduled to take place next month in Dar-es-Salaam, Tanzania. This Conference, among other things, is expected to grapple with the problem of the inundation of the region with small arms and light weapons in the hands of non-state actors resulting from the ending of conflicts in the region. My delegation calls upon the international Community, not only to support the convening of this Conference, but also to extend political and financial support to the resultant programmes aimed at the demobilization, disarmament and resettlement of ex-combatants. Such support will contribute greatly to the consolidation of peace and security in the Great Lakes Region.

Mr. Chairman,

Global military expenditure, after falling off following the end of the Cold War, has resumed its growth, currently by more than 5 per cent annually. Conversely, the flow of official development assistance from developed countries to developing countries is falling steadily. Additionally, products from developing countries are finding it difficult to enter the markets of industrial economies. This dual assault has exacerbated the conditions of underdevelopment and poverty in the developing countries. These conditions, in turn breed insecurity and conflict. There is, therefore, an urgent need to re-examine the relationship between disarmament and development.

My delegation welcomes the Report of the Group of Conventional Experts on the relationship between disarmament and development contained in doc A/59/119 and looks forward to its discussion by the Committee.
Finally, Uganda is concerned by the failure by both the Conference on Disarmament and the United Nations Disarmament Commission, two important forums for multilateral disarmament efforts, to undertake any substantive work for lack of agreement on work programme and agenda, respectively. We do hope that these bodies will be able to overcome these obstacle without delay and resume their substantive work.

I thank you.