Statement by

H.E. Mr. Henrique Banze
Deputy Minister for Foreign Affairs and Cooperation of the Republic of Mozambique

at the

General Debate of the First Committee

New York, October 5, 2005
Mr. Chairman,

Allow me on behalf of my delegation, to congratulate you on your election as Chairman of this Committee. My congratulations are extensive also to the members of the Bureau. I am confident that under your able guidance we will manage to find the way forward as we discuss the pressing matters of the agenda of this Committee. I would like also to commend your predecessor, Ambassador Alfonso de Alba for the way in which he conducted the work of the Committee during the last session.

I would like to start my statement by associating my delegation to the statements made earlier by Indonesia, on behalf of the Non Aligned Movement, by Nigeria, on behalf of the African Group as well as Botswana on behalf of SADC.

May I first express my Government’s deepest condolences at the recent tragic terrorist attacks that have claimed many innocent lives as well as destruction of property in Bali, Indonesia.

My delegation wishes to join the Secretary General’s and other delegations’ concerns over successive failures, first by the Non-Proliferation Treaty (NPT) Review Conference, held in May this year, as well as by the
recently-concluded High-level Plenary Meeting of the General Assembly to reach a meaningful conclusion on the issue of nuclear disarmament and non-proliferation. Lack of progress on this important issue is a matter of serious concern, given its profound implications for the overall stability of our planet, characterized by ever growing threats to international peace and security.

Thus, while expressing our disappointment over such setbacks, it is our hope that goodwill will prevail, so to enable consensus on the steps needed to address these vital issues. We managed to reach consensus on many other important issues in today’s agenda, and we strongly believe on the need to finding a common ground on this issue as well. We strongly believe that only through strict adherence to multilateralism and participation of all concerned, can we succeed in confidence building among member states, thus reducing the need to develop nuclear weapons.

My delegation shares the view that the approach to the NPT should be based in its three pillars: disarmament, non-proliferation and the right of all states parties to develop research, production and use of nuclear energy for peaceful purposes. The successful implementation of relevant provisions of the NPT requires that all nuclear and non-nuclear weapons states shoulder their share of responsibilities in this regard in good faith.
In the same vein, all states should commit themselves to ensure that the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty (CTBT) enters into force, through their accession to or ratification of the Treaty. In the meantime, the moratorium on nuclear test explosions should be maintained. On the other hand, other international instruments related to weapons of mass destruction, including the Chemical Weapons Convention and the Biological and Toxins Weapons Convention must be universalised to ensure their effectiveness for international security.

Mr. Chairman,

My Government remains committed to the implementation of the UN Program for the Prevention, Combating and Eradication of Illicit Trade on Small Arms and Light Weapons. Throughout these years, history has demonstrated that such weapons, due to their easy availability, are a continued and growing source of instability, crime and undermine development efforts of many countries, in particular developing countries. To deal with the matters related to the prevention, combating and eradication of illicit trade in small arms and light weapons, Mozambique has established a National Commission on Small Arms (COPRECAL), which has been crucial in the efforts to curb their illicit trade.

The Government has developed efforts so as to COPRECAL displays its role in curbing the illicit trade on
small arms and light weapon. Nevertheless, financial and more substantial technical assistance is still needed for the COPRECAL to fully become operational. Production of a National Action Plan to Prevent, Combat and Eradicate the Illicit Manufacturing, Trade Trafficking and Use of Small Arms and Light Weapons is among the ongoing actions that need technical and financial assistance.

My Government wishes to express its determination and will to continue to support and complement the current efforts aiming at creating an international instrument to identify, mark and trace illicit traffic on small arms and light weapons.

Similarly, we are committed to the Ottawa Convention on Anti-personnel landmines, for we regard its implementation as the best way to free the world from anti-personnel landmines.

In this regard, we commend the successful outcome of the Review Conference on the Implementation of the Convention on the Prohibition of the Use, Stockpiling, Production and Transfer of Anti-personnel Landmines held last year in November/December, in Nairobi, thus making a timely contributing to strengthen the implementation of the Convention. We commend the Government of Kenya for the organization of the meeting.
In Mozambique we are committed to developing efforts to minimize the effects of landmines through demining programs and humanitarian assistance. From 1992 to 2004, our program has resulted in the destruction of around 112,000 landmines, the dismantling of more than 130,000 of such insidious weapons, as well as clearing of around 228 million square meters throughout the country.

Although the situation has improved visibly since the beginning of the program, in overall, the anti-personnel landmines still pose a great danger to human life as well as to social and economic development of the country. For instance, since 1996 through 2004, 427 landmine accidents were registered, causing 655 victims, of which 246 died as a result of the injuries they have suffered. Between January and August this year, there were 8 accidents reported, which have resulted in 18 victims, including 8 deaths.

We would like to take this opportunity to thank all those countries and organizations that joined my Government in its efforts to free the country of landmines. At the same time, may I also take this stage to appeal for a continued support by the international community in assisting Mozambique and indeed all countries affected by landmines in creating internal capacity for dealing with humanitarian and economic dimension of demining, as well as stockpile destruction, so that we can conclude the process before 2009 as required by the Ottawa Convention, thus contributing not only to our people's
security but to a more complementary and comprehensive development agenda of the international community, and particularly that of developing countries.

Mr. Chairman,

I would like to conclude by reiterating my Government's belief that the issues of disarmament and international security can best be addressed through close cooperation, multilateralism and consensus building, taking into account the interests of all member states. To this end, my delegation will spare no effort for the attainment of these goals as we consider the agenda of this Committee in the months ahead.

Thank you.