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STATEMENT

BY

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DELEGATE OF THE REPUBLIC OF ZAMBIA

DELIVERED AT THE GENERAL DEBATE
OF THE FIRST COMMITTEE

OF

THE 64TH REGULAR SESSION OF THE
UNITED NATIONS GENERAL ASSEMBLY

New York
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Mr. Chairman,

As this is the first time that the Zambian delegation is taking the floor, I would like to congratulate you on your election as the Chairman of this Committee, a compliment I also extend to the other members of the bureau. I am confident that with your leadership this Committee will successfully deliberate the work before it and in this regard, you can count on the support of my delegation.

My delegation aligns itself with the Statements delivered by the Federal Republic of Nigeria and the Republic of Indonesia on behalf of the African Group and the Non-Aligned Movement respectively.

Mr. Chairman,

My delegation takes note of the unilateral reductions in nuclear arsenals in recent years. However, the continued possession of such weapons by some Member States, coupled with the ambitions of others to own the same, has remained one of the fundamental threats to global human and environmental security.

This unfortunate situation has come about at a time when the United Nations (UN) has brought into existence various arms control treaties whose paramount objective is disarmament and non-proliferation of weapons of mass destruction. As State Parties to these treaties, our compliance and adherence to these instruments has not only been elusive but contentious.
It is for this reason therefore that Zambia acknowledges and appreciates regional efforts towards the creation and establishment of nuclear free zones and welcomes the commitments made by the leaders of Russia and the United States to follow up on the strategic arms reduction treaty as well as other areas of mutual interest to the world. As members of African Union, Zambia supports and is committed to the African nuclear Weapons Free Zone Treaty (Pelindaba Treaty). Zambia would like to urge the United Nations and the Security Council in particular to continue providing the necessary leadership in the universalisation of it. In addition to this, there is need also for the Security Council to strive for the enhancement of existing multilateral efforts and transparency in the areas of disarmament and non-proliferation.

Mr. Chairman

The Chemical Weapons Convention (CWC) and the Biological and Toxin Weapons Convention (BWC) are core instruments in the fight against the non-proliferation of Weapons of Mass Destruction. Some biological and chemical substances have dual-uses which pose both challenges and opportunities. Zambia welcomes the support provided by the Cooperation and Assistance Division of the Organisation for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons to Members States, particularly developing countries, in implementing the Convention.

In this age of international terrorism, the detection of proliferation at the border by Member States is important to their security and well being. Given Zambia’s geographical location, there is need for support from the International Committee in order to enhance both technical and human capacity.
Mr. Chairman,

The problem of illicit trade in small arms and light weapons (SALW) has continued to be one of the difficult arms control and disarmament issues for Zambia. This is mainly based on the following problems, that is the never ending civil strife and conflicts in some neighbouring countries and our geo-political position that makes border policing a very costly exercise.

Zambia is committed to the 2001 Programme of Action to Prevent, Combat and Eradicate the Illicit Trade in SALW in All Its Aspects. Lack of resources has however, slowed down our pace of implementation. As a developing country therefore, faced with limited resources, the rendering of international assistance by way of bilateral or multilateral cooperation is critical to its realisation.

Mr. Chairman,

Land mines continue to pose a stumbling block to growth in sustainable socioeconomic development at the same time placing huge financial obligations on Zambia’s efforts in executing the de-mining exercise whose costs are enormous. Although we experience limited injuries from land mines the challenges Zambia still continue to face are the cost of treating and rehabilitating such victims and the de-mining exercise itself. It is in this connection, that Zambia appreciates the assistance rendered to us in undertaking the National Land Mine Survey exercise from August 2008 to July 2009. The survey covered seven out of the nine provinces suspected to contain affected areas. It is our hope therefore that the expected survey report will go a long way in
providing the much needed comprehensive statistics on the prevalence of land mines and eventually form the foundation upon which policy action could be pursued.

Zambia acknowledges and appreciates the cooperation it has had with its neighbours in de-mining our common borders.

Zambia reaffirmed its commitment to the Convention on Cluster Munitions through its ratification of this convention in August 2009 and urges other member states who have not done so yet to do the same in order to stop the serious violation of international humanitarian laws associated with the use of cluster munitions.

Mr. Chairman

In conclusion, I wish to reiterate my Government’s commitment to general and complete disarmament. It is our hope that all clusters of weaponry under negotiation will be treated with the attention they deserve in both the United Nations Disarmament Commission and the Conference on Disarmament.

Thank You, Mr. Chairman.