STATEMENT BY
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PERMANENT REPRESENTATIVE OF THE UNITED REPUBLIC
OF TANZANIA TO THE UNITED NATIONS
DURING THE PLENARY SESSION OF THE FIRST COMMITTEE
OF THE 66TH SESSION OF THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY

NEW YORK, 3 OCTOBER 2011
Mr. Chairman,

My delegation wishes to congratulate you and the Bureau for your well-deserved election. You all have our full confidence and assurances of our cooperation and support.

My delegation associates itself with the statement of the African Group delivered by Nigeria, and that of NAM by Indonesia.

We equally welcome the presence and commitment of H.E Sergio Duarte, High Representative of the Secretary General on Disarmament. We welcome his statement.

Mr. Chairman,

The United Republic of Tanzania supports the various instruments of the United Nations aimed at complete, irreversible and verifiable disarmament covering all types of weapons. We are an adherent signatory of the Pelindaba Treaty to ensure Africa remains a Nuclear Weapons Free Zone. But we are especially concerned with the security threat posed by the proliferation of Small Arms and Light Weapons particularly in the Great Lakes Region of Africa.

Disarmament is critical to the realization of the fundamental responsibility of the United Nations as required by the Charter – “Maintenance of International Peace and Security”. My delegation is convinced—as everybody else should—that the use and misuse of any category of weapons can threaten peace and security. Present conflicts and instability in parts of the world are manifestations of such violations.
All weapons regardless of their categories pose danger to life and property. We therefore urge that the disarmament debate should not exclude any category of weapons. Discrimination of weapons amounts to discrimination of human beings too, and worse still this discrimination tends to hinge on disparity in economic status. The United Republic of Tanzania believes that disarmament should not be limited to Weapons of Mass Destruction, including nuclear weapons, but should also cover conventional weapons including Small Arms and Light Weapons, in all their aspects, which for us are the greatest cause of conflict, insecurity and instability.

Mr. Chairman,

Small arms and light weapons also fuel crime and we have witnessed and continue to witness our people as well as visitors to our countries being victims of crime perpetrated with such arms and weapons. One example is the current menace of piracy. Another is drug trafficking, and illegal exploitation of natural resources.

Mr Chairman,

We live in a globalized world. The proliferation of illegal small arms and light weapons in all their forms and manifestations will ultimately affect people from all over the world. Let us therefore work together for comprehensive disarmament so as to create a secure environment for the free movement of people and trade but also secure production activities. Peoples' development, movement and freedom are very much linked with their security. The best way the First Committee can contribute to those basic requisites of development, namely peace and security, is by making progress on such disarmament.

Mr. Chairman

The United Republic of Tanzania is aware that resources for the UN and the International Community are limited and that all regions have a role in assisting the United Nations to maintain international peace and security as provided for in chapter VIII of the Charter. That is why the United Republic of Tanzania has always participated in programmes and projects led by the UN or regional and sub-regional organizations in pursuit of durable peace and stability.
That is why we sponsored Security Council Resolution 1653 (2006) which addressed, among other things, the disarmament of rebel groups in the Great Lakes Region. My country has also effectively participated in various disarmament processes and initiatives in the Great Lakes Region spearheaded by the Regional Centre on Small Arms and Light Weapons based in Nairobi, Kenya. We have also worked and continue to work with the Secretariat of the International Conference on the Great Lakes Region based in Bujumbura, Burundi; the East African Cooperation Secretariat based in Arusha, Tanzania, and several Peace-keeping and peace building Missions and activities in Africa and the World, more often than not, with the meagre resources that we posses.

Mr. Chairman

The United Republic of Tanzania does not support the nuclear armament of any country. The world will, without doubt, be a better place without nuclear and other weapons of mass destruction. We consider all WMDs as a grave danger to international peace and security. In that regard we welcome the initiative undertaken by the US and the Russian Federation to embark on the course of Nuclear Disarmament and we call upon other nuclear powers to do likewise.

Mr. Chairman

It is also true that disarmament can be an expensive exercise for developing countries, especially least developed ones. The resources and technical know-how necessary for safe disarmament may not always exist in many such countries. Financing and technical gaps in that regard do exist and require the support of others in the international community to fill those gaps. My delegation calls upon the UN and member states with the means to do so to help.

I am aware of existing initiatives under the Peace Building Commission, Peace Keeping Missions and other initiatives, but a comprehensive and holistic approach to disarmament world-wide is needed to reach all the member states. This is possible and doable. Let us all do get involved.

There are also cases of historical injustice meted on some populations in the world. Complete disarmament will necessitate that such issues be addressed and resolved. As we continue to negotiate the Arms Trade Treaty, the goal should be to
ensure that each state should not possess more weapons than those types and amounts acceptable and justifiable under article 51 of the Charter.

International cooperation, upon request, as well as offering assistance to victims of use or misuse of arms should also be considered in these deliberations.

Mr. Chairman

In conclusion, The United Republic of Tanzania commits itself to do its part, working with others, to ensure a safer world for development and freedom, a safer world fit for our children, through complete, irreversible and verifiable disarmament covering all types of weapons.

I thank You