STATEMENT BY

H.E. MR. CHARLES T. NTWAAGAE
AMBASSADOR AND PERMANENT REPRESENTATIVE
OF THE REPUBLIC OF BOTSWANA TO THE
UNITED NATIONS

DURING THE

GENERAL DEBATE

OF THE

FIRST COMMITTEE

ON THE OCCASION OF THE 67TH SESSION OF THE
UNITED NATIONS GENERAL ASSEMBLY

15 OCTOBER 2012
NEW YORK

PLEASE CHECK AGAINST DELIVERY
Mr. Chairman,

1. I would like to express my satisfaction at seeing you, Ambassador Desra Percaya, the distinguished Permanent Representative of Indonesia to the United Nations as Chairman of the First Committee for the 67th Session of the General Assembly. I also wish to congratulate the other Members of the Bureau on their well-deserved election, and assure your Team of the full support and cooperation of my delegation.

2. Let me also take this opportunity to thank Ambassador Jarmo Viinanen of Finland for his effective stewardship of the First Committee during the 66th session of the General Assembly.

3. My delegation associates itself with the Statements delivered earlier by the distinguished Representatives of Nigeria and Iran, on behalf of the African Group and the Non-Aligned Movement, respectively.

Mr. Chairman,

4. Botswana reaffirms its commitment to the multilateral processes relating to disarmament. The interrelatedness of the issues of international peace and security; development; and disarmament cannot be overemphasized, and my delegation continues to accord priority attention to these issues.

5. When addressing this Committee under this Item during the 66th Session of the UN General Assembly, my Delegation underscored the importance of disarmament in reducing political tensions as well as mitigating conflicts.

Mr. Chairman,

6. As we meet today, there is a general air of frustration sweeping across the international system regarding the United Nations disarmament machinery.

7. The reality that the world's single-most important disarmament negotiating multilateral platform - The Conference on Disarmament - remains in perpetual deadlock is more than exasperating for all of us.
8. We remain acutely concerned at the lack of progress in the substantive work of Conference on Disarmament in Geneva.

9. Botswana fully supports the efforts of the Secretary General aimed at revitalizing the work of the Conference on Disarmament, and we urge the Members of the Conference to adopt and immediately begin implementing its programme of work.

10. There is no doubt that such progress would offer renewed hope for the start of negotiations on other important disarmament instruments, including the conclusion of a non-discriminatory, multilateral and effectively verifiable treaty banning the production of fissile material for nuclear weapons and other nuclear explosive devices that should fulfill both nuclear disarmament and nuclear non-proliferation objectives.

Mr. Chairman,

11. Our hopes for nuclear-disarmament were rekindled in 2010, following the adoption the Action Plan at the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty Review Conference. At that time, nuclear possessing States reaffirmed their unequivocal undertaking to accomplish the total elimination of their nuclear arsenals leading to nuclear disarmament, and committed to accelerating progress in this regard.

12. Botswana is of the view that global disarmament efforts can benefit from efforts at the regional level, particularly progress in creating nuclear free zones. This remains one important milestone in nuclear disarmament which can spur international efforts.

13. We welcome the forthcoming Conference on the Establishment of the Middle-East zone Free of Nuclear weapons and other weapons of mass destruction to be hosted by Finland in 2012.

14. We look forward to the successful deliberations at this important Conference, which we believe will inform fundamentally the 2015 NPT Review Cycle.
15. For our part, we reiterate our commitment to the implementation of
the Pelindaba Treaty, which established a nuclear free zone in our own
backyard.

Mr. Chairman,

16. Botswana puts high on its priority the international efforts being made
towards the entry into force of the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban
Treaty. Having ratified this treaty some years ago, we remain
concerned at the slow pace of ratification of this important treaty. Our
concern stems from the fact that such sluggish progress could endanger
the already fragile nuclear disarmament landscape.

17. We thus take a keen interest in the universalization drive for this
important instrument, and wish to call on the nuclear weapon States,
particularly those countries listed under Annex II that have not yet done
so, to consider ratification without any further delay.

Mr. Chairman,

18. Botswana welcomes the adoption by consensus, in September 2012,
of the final outcome document of the Second Review Conference on the
UN Programme of Action to Combat and Eradicate the Illicit Trade in
Small Arms and Light Weapons in All Its Aspects as well as the
International Tracing Instrument.

19. As we focus on the implementation of the Programme of Action,
Botswana appeals for international assistance and cooperation in the
areas of border control and management, marking and record-keeping
so as to effectively contribute to the fight against the proliferation of
small arms and light weapons.
20. International cooperation and assistance measures remain critical and primary in determining the success or failure of national efforts in implementing all aspects of the Programme of Action. In this respect, it would be useful for us to consider how the limited resources from various partners could be effectively utilized to attain concrete results.

Mr. Chairman,

21. We regret the fact that the inaugural UN Conference on the Arms Trade Treaty held in July this year could not conclude the envisaged treaty aimed at regulating international trade in conventional weapons.

22. While that frustration remains fresh in our minds, we remain convinced that all was not lost. In fact, the July Conference on the ATT marked a significant step in galvanizing the international community towards a common resolve in that regard.

23. It is for this reason that we place a high premium on the resumption of negotiations on this important treaty in the near future.

Mr. Chairman,


25. The Review Conference adopted a forward-looking outcome document, which among other things, established a sponsorship programme to facilitate the participation of developing countries at future meetings, and adopted a revised reporting form for confidence-building measure submissions, and renewed the mandate of the Implementation Support Unit.
Mr. Chairman,

26. In conclusion, Botswana is convinced that the multilateral system remains the right platform for reinvigorating the disarmament and non-proliferation machinery.

27. In this connection, we look forward to the next Session of the Conference on Disarmament – which should adopt its programme of work and resume implementation in earnest.

28. We are also optimistic that the negotiations on the Arms Trade Treaty will resume in the near future, and deliver the important international binding instrument we all yearn for.

29. I thank you for your attention.