STATEMENT MADE BY
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DEMOCRATIC REPUBLIC OF ETHIOPIA TO THE UN
AT THE GENERAL DEBATE OF THE FIRST COMMITTEE OF
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ASSEMBLY

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Mr. Chairman,

Allow me at the outset, to congratulate you and other members of the Bureau on your elections to guide the work of this Committee. My delegation assures you and the Bureau members of its full cooperation and support.

I would like also to express my appreciation to the Secretary General for his reports on agenda items under the Committee’s purview.

Ethiopia associates itself with the statement made by Nigeria on behalf of the African Group and Indonesia on behalf of the Non-Aligned Movement.

Mr. Chairman,

It is perhaps not that much of an exaggeration if we said these are dangerous times. It is during times such as this one, that we ought to consider all aspects of the potential sources of mortal challenges. The continued existence of nuclear weapons and of their possible use or threat of use poses existential threat to humanity. What is more troubling to comprehend is that these deadly and destructive weapons are being further modernized and upgraded. To make matters worse, these weapons remain the only weapons of mass destruction not yet explicitly prohibited under international law. Curbing the escalation of nuclear arms race and reducing the stockpile of other weapons of mass destruction are tasks which should be accomplished without any further delay.

The threat of nuclear weapons and other weapons of mass destruction is growing today than ever before because of the possibility that they might end up in the wrong hands. But this is only part of the problem. When we consider the deficit of wisdom in so many areas, and the capacity of states to commit follies, we can appreciate the challenge we face. Hence, the need to take concrete actions to conclude a legally binding and effective treaty to curtail the illicit trade and transfer of such weapons, in particular to non-state actors is critically urgent.
The step-by-step approach has failed to make concrete and systematic progress towards the total elimination of nuclear weapons. We must exert all efforts to secure the conclusion of a comprehensive convention on nuclear weapons to prohibit their possession, development, production, acquisition, testing, stockpiling, transfer, use or threat of use and to provide for their destruction.

We welcome the conclusion of the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action (JCPOA) between the E3/EU+3 and Iran. The JCPOA proves that diplomacy works to resolve seemingly insurmountable challenges. We also welcome the unanimous endorsement of the JCPOA by the UN Security Council, and call on the parties to implement the plan in good faith.

Mr. Chairman,

It is regrettable that the 2015 Review Conference of the Parties to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons failed to reach a consensus on a final outcome document. However, this shall not put into question that NPT remains the cornerstone of the global non-proliferation regime. The three pillars of the NPT (nuclear disarmament, nonproliferation, and the peaceful uses of nuclear technology) still represents an unparalleled framework for maintaining and strengthening international peace, security, and stability.

We have endorsed the Humanitarian Pledge issued at the conclusion of the Vienna Conference on the Humanitarian Impact of Nuclear Weapons. The endorsement of the Pledge by 119 countries demonstrates that catastrophic humanitarian consequences of nuclear weapons are a fundamental global concern. We must exert all our efforts to identify and pursue effective measures to fill the legal gap for the prohibition and elimination of nuclear weapons in light of their unacceptable humanitarian consequences and associated risks.

My delegation would like to stress that the total elimination of nuclear weapons remains the only absolute guarantee against the use or threat of use of nuclear weapons, and further reiterate our call for unconditional negative security assurances to all non-nuclear-weapon states against the
use or threat of use of nuclear weapons by nuclear weapons states, pending their total elimination.

Mr. Chairman,

The African continent has shown its commitment for regional peace and security through the signings of the African Nuclear-Weapon-Free Zone Treaty (the Treaty of Pelindaba) and the CTBT by a large number of its member states. The Pelindaba Treaty re-affirms the status of Africa as a nuclear-weapon-free zone and provides a shield for the African territory, including by preventing the stationing of nuclear explosive devices on the continent and prohibiting testing of those weapons among others. Ethiopia remains committed to the Treaty.

Ethiopia supports the universalization and early entry into force of the Comprehensive Nuclear Test-Ban Treaty, and in this regard we call upon those states that have not yet signed or ratified the CTBT to do so as a matter of urgency. We especially call upon the states in annex II of the CTBT and whose ratifications are crucial for the treaty’s entry into force. As a signatory to the CTBT, Ethiopia has been working towards the realization of the purposes and objectives of the Treaty with close cooperation of the Preparatory Commission of the CTBTO.

We firmly believe that multilateralism and international cooperation are crucial to effective and long-term results in the field of disarmament. Ethiopia joins other member-States in reaffirming the importance work entrusted to of the Conference on Disarmament as the world’s single multilateral disarmament negotiating forum and expresses its concern at the impasse that has prevented the CD from fulfilling its mandate.

We share the concern expressed by several delegations towards the convening of a Conference on the establishment of a Middle East Zone Free of Nuclear Weapons and all other Weapons of Mass Destruction, and call on all stakeholders to proactively engage in this process in the spirit of mutual understanding. The establishment of a nuclear free Middle East is essential for global peace and security and for the stability of the region.
Mr. Chairman,

The conventional weapons, particularly, illicit small arms and light weapons, are causing havoc and mass suffering across the world, including our sub region of the Horn of Africa. The unauthorized use of these weapons by non-state actors and their wide-spread and uncontrolled access to them indeed remain to be a source of threat and great concern for the states in the region. It is precisely for this reason that implementation of international and regional commitments and treaty-based obligations in respect to combating illicit trafficking in small arms and light weapons is very critical. We are always ready to continue to work with regional states and international community to monitor, control and put an end to the illegal trade and transfer of these weapons.

In conclusion, Mr. Chairman, my delegation wishes to reiterate once again Ethiopia’s unreserved commitment to discharge all its treaty obligations as well as to uphold the pertinent United Nations resolutions relating to various issues of general disarmament.

I Thank You.