STATEMENT BY THE DEPUTY REPRESENTATIVE OF THE REPUBLIC OF MALAWI TO THE UNITED NATIONS AT THE 2016 THEMATIC DEBATE ON NUCLEAR WEAPONS

New York, 16 October 2016
Mr. Chairman

Malawi has always rendered political support for the disarmament of nuclear weapons. To this end, we have supported the Comprehensive Test Ban Treaty (CTBT) by participating in past conferences aimed at promoting the entry into force of the treaty and by voting for all resolutions aimed at nuclear disarmament in the first Committee of the General Assembly. As part of its efforts to see the eradication of nuclear weapons, Malawi also hosted a national workshop on the CTBT in Lilongwe in February, 2006. In this regard we wish to affirm our commitment towards realizing a global ban on nuclear testing and I wish to assure you of our intention to co-sponsor the draft resolution “Taking forward multilateral nuclear disarmament negotiations” to establish a mandate for negotiations in 2017 on “a legally binding instrument to prohibit nuclear weapons, leading towards their total elimination”.

Mr. Chairman

We are cognizant of the political support by the international community for the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test Ban Treaty which now has 183 States signatories and 159 ratifying states, and we join the call for the eight remaining Annex 2 States to ratify the treaty for it to enter into force. This will cement the conviction that nuclear tests must indeed be banned once and for all. Malawi ratified the CTBT on 21 November 2008, after it signed the Treaty on 9 October 1996.

Mr. Chairman

In recent years, the humanitarian impact of nuclear weapons has increasingly been recognized as a fundamental and global concern that must be at the core of all deliberations on nuclear disarmament and nuclear non-proliferation. This issue is now firmly established on the global agenda: The 2010 Review Conference of the NPT expressed “deep concern at the catastrophic humanitarian consequences of any use of nuclear weapons”. Similarly, the 2011 resolution of the Council of Delegates of the International Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement emphasized the incalculable human suffering associated with any use of nuclear weapons, and the implications for international humanitarian law.
Mr. Chairman

The March 2013 Conference on the Humanitarian Impact of Nuclear Weapons held in Oslo and the Subsequent meetings, held in Nayarit and Vienna in 2014, presented a platform to engage in a fact-based discussion on the impact of a nuclear weapon detonation. As a conclusion, Austria issued a pledge to fill the legal gap for the prohibition and elimination of nuclear weapons which at least 127 states including Malawi have endorsed. The broad participation at the Conferences reflects the recognition that the catastrophic effects of a detonation are of concern and relevance to all. In light of the catastrophic humanitarian consequences of any use of nuclear weapons, it is beyond time to prohibit such weapons, just as chemical weapons, biological weapons, anti-personnel landmines and cluster munitions have been prohibited.

Mr. Chairman

It is in the interest of the very survival of humanity that nuclear weapons are never used again, under any circumstances. The catastrophic effects of a nuclear weapon detonation, whether by accident, miscalculation or design, cannot be adequately addressed. All efforts must be exerted to eliminate this threat. The only way to guarantee that nuclear weapons will never be used again is through their total elimination. At the UN open-ended working group on nuclear disarmament in Geneva this year, it was clear beyond doubt that an overwhelming majority of states are committed to commencing negotiations in 2017 on a legally binding instrument to prohibit nuclear weapons. At this 2016 session, we urge all Governments to support the immediate commencement of negotiations on a treaty banning nuclear weapons.

Mr. Chairman

As a non-nuclear weapon state, we are so proud to be a signatory to the African Nuclear Weapons Free Zone Treaty (the Pelindaba Treaty), which is our regional approach to strengthening global nuclear non-proliferation and disarmament norms and consolidating international efforts towards peace and security. We ratified this treaty in 2009 to register our full support to a world free of nuclear weapons. Malawi also adheres to the provisions contained in the Non Proliferation Treaty, and to this end, we deposited instruments of accession to the treaty in 1986.
Mr. Chairman

The danger posed by nuclear weapons is real and should not be ignored as these weapons have the potential to end life as we know it. As such the world should not stand aloof and wait for disaster to strike before we can act. The time to act is now. We therefore call on all nuclear weapon states and all states that have nuclear technology to fully engage in multilateral efforts to eliminate nuclear weapons globally, as well as to be transparent in their nuclear energy programs.

With the progress that this meeting is making so far, we look forward to an outcome that gives hope for a world free of nuclear weapons. We look forward to a world where nuclear technology can be used for peaceful and beneficial purposes and not as a tool for confrontation.

Thank you for your attention.