STATEMENT

BY

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At the General Debate of the First Committee

73rd Session

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Mr. Chairman,

On behalf of the Afghanistan Delegation, I congratulate the election of the bureau of the 73rd session of the First Committee. We pledge our full support and cooperation.

Afghanistan aligns itself with the statement delivered on behalf of the Non-Aligned Movement.

Mr. Chairman,

Afghanistan is deeply concerned with the declining situation on international security. The impacts of nuclear weapons upon the environment, human health, food security and economic development are catastrophic and we must work together to reduce the risks of nuclear weapons and the possible use or threat of their use.

Further, as emphasised by the UN Secretary General in his new Agenda for Disarmament, the international community must ensure accountability and end impunity for violations of international law.

Afghanistan is party to the Non-Proliferation Treaty, the Comprehensive Test Ban Treaty (CTBT), among a number of other multilateral treaties calling for the elimination of nuclear weapons and weapons of mass destruction. We urge all Member States that have not yet ratified the CTBT to do so.

My delegation firmly believes that multilateral diplomacy is at the core of advancing the disarmament and non-proliferation agenda. Only through strong, collective action can we achieve a nuclear-free world. In light of this, we welcome ongoing efforts, including dialogue to address relevant situations, and hope they will lead to positive outcomes.

Afghanistan welcomes recent hopeful developments and significant efforts of dialogue between the DPRK and the United States.

Further, my delegation would like to reiterate our strong support for the establishment of the Middle East as a zone free of Nuclear Weapons and all Weapons of Mass Destruction.

Mr. Chairman,

Afghanistan has endured tremendous suffering for over four decades. From experience, we can attest that the easy access and abundance of small arms and light weapons enables the strengthening and development of terrorists, violent extremists and organised criminal groups.
Since 2016, armed insurgent groups in Afghanistan have sharply escalated their attacks in Kabul and other large urban areas. These attacks typically involve small arms and light weapons. It is clear that the lack of arms control has been the main destabilizing and destructive element in fuelling the cycle of violence in our region.

As outlined by the 2030 Agenda, especially Goal 16, there is a clear link between arms regulation and development, as well as between illicit trafficking in arms and organised crime. Illicit weapons, drug trafficking and money laundering both enable and follow the purchase of weapons by non-state actors. We must work to better understand these complex relationships and take all necessary measures to effectively disrupt the flow of arms to conflict regions.

For Afghanistan, we believe small arms control is a prerequisite for regional stability and is a matter of top priority. As such, Afghanistan ratified and acceded to the Convention on Conventional Weapons and its protocols in August last year.

We call upon all relevant parties to take full responsibility for controlling the access of precursors and weapons to terrorist organisations and enhance their efforts to build national capacity for the effective implementation of the Program of Action to Prevent, Combat and Eradicate the Illicit Trade in Small Arms and Lights Weapons.

Mr Chairman,

The use of Explosive Remnant of War (ERWs), and land mines pose an unprecedented threat to global peace and security. Afghanistan remains one of the most mined countries in the world. Last year, more than 2 000 Afghans were killed or injured by landmines - this is five times the number of civilians killed in 2012.

Of equal concern, Afghanistan is the country most affected by the indiscriminate and unlawful use of IEDs in the world. Last year, 40% of the 10,000 total civilian causalities and injuries reported in Afghanistan were caused by IED attacks. 81% of these victims were children and many of those who survived lost limbs or eyes, and suffer serious psychological trauma.

The catastrophic impact of IEDs extends beyond just physical security alone. Rapid advancements in IEDs design and detonation have also brought unprecedented challenges for humanitarian assistance in various conflict settings around the world.

IEDs have become the primary weapon for non-state armed groups across many conflicts and are responsible for killing and maiming thousands of civilians every day. Last year, more than one-third of all countries in the world were affected by IED attacks and the increasingly transnational nature of these devices demands a comprehensive international response.

It is for this reason that Afghanistan calls upon all Member States to support the resolution titled ‘Countering the threat posed by improvised explosive devices’
adopted by consensus in both the First Committee and in the General Assembly in 2015.

This Resolution conveys Afghanistan’s strong commitment to prevent and mitigate IED attacks, and serves to bring together and build consensus at the international level. We thank all Member States, especially Australia and France, that have supported this Resolution.

Mr. Chairman,

In conclusion, I would like to assure you of my delegation’s constructive engagement throughout the discussion of this session of the Committee.

I thank you for your attention.