STATEMENT BY
H.E. MR. NKOPANE R. MONYANE
AMBASSADOR AND PERMANENT REPRESENTATIVE
OF THE KINGDOM OF LESOTHO TO THE UNITED
NATIONS
DURING THE GENERAL DEBATE OF THE FIRST
COMMITTEE

16 OCTOBER 2019
NEW YORK
Mr. Chairman,

Allow me to begin by congratulating you and other members of the Bureau on your election to the First Committee. We are confident that your experience, talent and energies will ensure a successful outcome for the work of this committee. My delegation aligns itself with the common position expressed in the statements by Ambassador Lazarous Kepambwe of Zambia on behalf of the Africa Group and the Representative of Indonesia on behalf of the Non-Aligned Movement.

The objective to maintain international peace and security and to achieve a world without nuclear weapons and other weapons of mass destruction is the raison d'etre for the formation of the United Nations. The need to secure the global community has never been greater. Sadly, the threat of the use of these weapons continues to shutter our hopes for a peaceful world. This is so, despite the fact that, over the years the UN General Assembly has adopted numerous resolutions on the issue of arms control and disarmament including small arms. Nuclear, Chemical and Biological Weapons constitute a clear and present danger to global peace and security as well as the future survival of humanity. In this regard, the total elimination of these weapons of mass destruction remains the only absolute and viable panacea against their use or threat of use.
Mr. Chairman,

The time has come for the international community to demonstrate resolve and commitment to ensure the issue of arms control and disarmament is done on a multilateral basis in order to secure global peace and security. In recent years, new dimensions have become increasingly important in international security, these include; terrorism, illegal arms, drug trafficking, nuclear and other weapons of mass destruction. The United Nations has had to grapple with crises situations in many parts of the world in accordance with its mandate to maintain international peace and security. As today’s problems grow ever more global, multilateralism is more important than ever. There is a need to demonstrate the importance of multilateralism as a major facet of international relations.

September 2019 marked the second anniversary of the opening for signature of the Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons (TPNW) as well as the commemoration of the International Day for the Total Elimination of Nuclear Weapons. Lesotho and three other Southern African Countries (Botswana, Tanzania and Zambia) joined the steadily increasing number of Member States of the United Nations in becoming signatories to the TPNW. Lesotho, therefore, will continue to espouse all efforts to enhance the institutional fabric of this treaty.
Mr. Chairman,

I wish to express our concern over the slow pace of progress in adhering to the objectives and legal obligations of the Non-Proliferation Treaty (NPT). The NPT is an important pillar in the pursuit for nuclear disarmament, however it has not attained universality fifty (50) years since its adoption. It is the only legal regime for preventing the spread of nuclear weapons technology, promoting cooperation in the peaceful use of nuclear energy and furthering the goal of achieving nuclear disarmament. It is our hope that the 10th NPT Review Conference that will be held in New York in 2020, will provide the opportunity for all Member States to build consensus and work in earnest to achieve the objectives of the NPT.

Moreover, it has long been accepted that the future credibility of the NPT will depend on the effective implementation of the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty (CTBT). However, there is still no international ban on nuclear weapons testing as the Comprehensive Nuclear Test Ban Treaty (CTBT) grapples to garner requisite number of ratifications for its entry into force.
These developments raise concerns that the risk of nuclear use is increasing and the legal obligations for non-proliferation and disarmament are being undermined. This state of affairs surely calls for action on our part as Member States.

Mr. Chairman,

As I conclude, allow me to reiterate Lesotho’s support for all United Nations Resolutions on arms control and disarmament and in particular, on the establishment of nuclear-weapons-free zones across the world which aim to achieve nuclear disarmament objectives and thereby promote and strengthen regional and global peace and security. It is in this spirit that I wish to reaffirm my country’s commitment to the Treaty of Pelindaba which paved the way for the African continent to be a nuclear-weapons-free zone.

Finally, I wish to take this opportunity and call on the entire international community to join hands in bridging the gulf between rhetoric and action and fast track the implementation of the NPT. In the same vein, we reiterate the need for speedy entry into force of the TPNW to ensure that humanity lives in peace without fear of extinction.

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