REMARKS

BY

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UNITED NATIONS

AT

THE UNITED NATIONS CONFERENCE TO NEGOTIATE A
LEGALLY BINDING INSTRUMENT TO PROHIBIT NUCLEAR
WEAPONS, LEADING TOWARDS THEIR TOTAL ELIMINATION

March 28, 2017

New York
Madam Chairperson,

It gives me great pleasure to congratulate you on your election as the President of this conference. We are confident that with your experience and able leadership, you will effectively steer our collective work during this conference. I would also like to congratulate the bureau members on their election and assure them of my delegation’s full support.

Ethiopia associates itself with the statement delivered by Cape Verde on behalf of the African Group.

Madam Chairperson,

We all agree, and we have been saying over and over again, that the continued existence of nuclear weapons and of their possible use or threat of use poses existential threat to humanity. This coupled with the times we are living in, I am sure no one disagrees with me if I say that these are dangerous times, makes the consideration of all aspects of the potential sources of mortal challenges critically urgent.
Much to our dismay, these weapons remain the only weapons of mass destruction not yet explicitly prohibited under international law. What is more troubling to comprehend is that these deadly and destructive weapons are being further modernized and upgraded. The threat of nuclear weapons and other weapons of mass destruction is growing today than ever before. The possibility of these weapons ending up in the wrong hands is not farfetched.

That is why we were saying all along that the total elimination of nuclear weapons remains the only absolute guarantee against the use or threat of use of nuclear weapons and their proliferation to non-state actors. The step-by step approach has failed so far to make concrete and systematic progress towards the total elimination of nuclear weapons. On the other hand, the need to take concrete actions to attain and maintain a world without nuclear weapons is critically urgent, as I said earlier.

It is in this context that we extended our support to this conference, which aims to negotiate a legally-binding instrument to prohibit nuclear weapons, leading towards their total elimination.
Madam Chairperson,

It is our earnest hope that these negotiations would complement and strengthen the nuclear disarmament and non-proliferation regime. The Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons remains the cornerstone of the global non-proliferation regime. In our view, the three pillars of the NPT still represent an unparalleled framework for maintaining and strengthening international peace and security. Of course, the participation of all member States and particularly nuclear power States is absolutely critical to ultimately succeed in reaching a legally binding instrument which prohibits nuclear weapon. That is why we believe every possible effort should be made to bring everybody on board.

Madam Chairperson, let me conclude by reiterating our support to you and members of the Bureau in guiding the work of this conference. I would like to assure you that we on our part are ready to participate fully and constructively in the negotiation and look forward to a successful outcome, which will help us make progress towards the total elimination of nuclear weapons.

I Thank You.