



Permanent Mission of Eritrea
to the United Nations

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**Statement by Dr. Amare Tekle, Diplomatic and Foreign Affairs Advisor,
Office of the President of the State of Eritrea and Alternate Deputy Head of Delegation
to the 59th session of the United Nations General Assembly**

First Committee - General Debate

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Chairperson,

The Eritrean delegation wishes to seize this opportunity to congratulate you on your election as Chairperson of the First Committee. It also congratulates the other members of the Bureau. Allow me to also express appreciation to the Under-Secretary for Disarmament Affairs, Mr. Nobuyasu Abe, for his introductory statement.

Chairperson,

It was believed that the end of the Cold War and its replacement by an evolving new international world order would create a new security environment which would be propitious for cooperation between erstwhile adversaries to meet the challenges, and to take advantage of the opportunities, of the new order. Indeed, some progress was made in the right direction. It is disappointing, however, that the threat to peace and security has increased rather than decreased. Traditional threats to peace are being overwhelmed by new forms like terrorism. The traditional actors - states - are being overshadowed by non-territorial and faceless non-state actors, including terrorists, warlords, drug lords and other lawless transnational operators. Nuclear weapons and weapons of mass destruction (WMDs) have not been eliminated or even meaningfully reduced; but the destruction caused by small arms conventional weapons and landmines have also been horrendously disastrous in their destabilizing effects on states - politically, economically and socially.

Chairperson,

Peace and security are threatened not by nuclear weapons only. Other **weapons of mass destruction**, including, in particular, Chemical and Biological Weapons, are also posing a great threat to the international security environment especially after the emergence of new and advanced technologies which are available in an ever-increasing way and readily facilitate the transport and proliferation of these weapons. This is particularly worrisome in this age of rampant terrorism.

Terrorism is the scourge of our times. In a little over a decade of its independent existence, Eritrea has been attacked several times by terrorist groups whose mindless acts have killed citizens and foreign visitors alike. The most recent attack took place during the celebrations of the Eleventh (11th) Anniversary of our independence in the provincial capital

of Barentu and another town, Tesseny. The villains were from a neighboring country. Other similar attacks in other towns were foiled in time. The internationalization of terror coupled with the easy availability of weapons, all kinds of weapons, and the advancement of the methods of transport and proliferation have made the elimination of terrorism and the weapons it can access a matter of urgent priority.

Chairperson,

The proliferation of **small arms and light-weapons** in many regions of the developing world, particularly Africa, has made them a real threat to peace, security and stability. Their immensely destructive effects are made evident by the scars of war and conflict left in many regions of Africa, particularly the Great Lakes region and the Horn of Africa as well as Liberia and Sierra Leone.

The Eritrean Government is fully cognizant of the necessity of regional, sub-regional and bilateral cooperation to terminate the proliferation of small arms and light weapons. To this end, it has consistently supported all of IGAD's initiatives and programs in the Horn of Africa. It has also held continued consultations with like-minded states in the region.

Chairperson,

The Horn of Africa is one of the regions that has been highly infested by **land mines and Unexploded Ordnance** which continue to wreak havoc on the livelihood of our people long after the end of conflict. These nefarious weapons have claimed, and continue to claim, numerous victims every year in spite of the great effort made to clear them, and have had a baneful effect on reconstruction efforts and development programs. The Government of Eritrea is creating safety nets to protect the vulnerable members of society, including children and the elderly, from the adverse consequences of landmines and UXOs in a long-term strategy to undertake a comprehensive program to address the humanitarian consequences of Ethiopian aggression.

There is now near-universal agreement that the international community can meet the challenges of the times, including traditional and new threats to peace, security and stability only through **multilateralism**. It is also readily accepted that the UN - a strengthened, revitalized and reformed UN - remains an indispensable instrument in humanity's quest for disarmament, the destruction of weapons of mass destruction, the termination of the threat posed to developing countries by Small Arms and Light Weapons (SALW) and to bring to an end the scourge of terrorism and similar phenomena.

The Eritrean delegation shares the concern of the other delegations before it that the role of multilateralism in disarmament and peace and security matters is decreasing and the view that only multilateralism - especially when under the auspices of the UN - can provide credibility and legitimacy. It is therefore imperative to promote multilateralism and to ensure the primacy of the role of the UN.

Multilateralism must be bolstered by the democratization of international relations, the promotion of the rule of law, the rejection of the logic of force and respect for the Charter and the sanctity of treaty agreements.

I thank you.