



# HOLY SEE

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**Statement of H.E. Archbishop Celestino Migliore  
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**Before the First Committee, on item 67:  
General and Complete Disarmament**

**New York, 7 October 2004**

Mr Chairman,

I would like to join the other Delegations in congratulating you and the rest of the bureau upon your election.

We are now on the eve of the sixtieth anniversary of the founding of the United Nations. The ideals embodied in the Charter -- seeking peace through international organization and cooperation -- have been a source of hope through the years. These ideals ought to animate us as much now as in 1945. But lately, a sense of fear seems to cloud our vision: fear of terrorist attacks, fear of new wars, fear of a breakdown in the processes of international law.

A sign of this fear is the surge in global military spending: many States are increasing their spending because they think that larger arsenals of firepower will provide security. Increased reliance on guns -- large and small -- is leading the world away from, not towards, security.

A clear result of such over-spending on the instruments of death is that governments are much less able to meet long-term commitments to education, health care and housing. The Millennium goals are left lagging while military priorities claim scarce funds. The United Nations pioneered studies which show the integral relationship between disarmament, development and security. Security for all is enhanced when disarmament and development steps complement one another. We must point up the economic benefits of disarmament measures. Development alternatives to militarism must be the constant work of this Committee.

Moreover, it certainly cannot be said that poverty leads directly to terrorism, but it is true that terrorists exploit conditions of poverty in ways that produce heightened conflict and violence.

Terrorists use an array of weapons to kill, maim and slaughter. Their global reach means that these weapons are being produced and sold internationally, on black markets as well as by State-sponsors. In conjunction with the Counter-Terrorism Committee, States must look for ways to reduce the easy availability of these weapons through increased export controls and added vigilance over weapon stockpiles.

The fragile state of the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty at this moment is very worrying, as proliferation of these weapons greatly increases the likelihood of terrorist acquisition.

On the immediate horizon is the 2005 Review Conference of the Non-Proliferation Treaty. As the three preparatory meetings for the Conference have shown, the NPT is in crisis. The inability even to agree on an agenda of the continuing relevance of the Final Document of the 2000 NPT Review Conference indicates the diverse perspectives among States Parties. The crisis, however, is far deeper than procedural disagreements. It has to do with the interplay of responsibilities between the Nuclear Weapons States and the non-Nuclear Weapons States. The non-nuclear members of the NPT have a duty not to engage

in the proliferation of nuclear weapons, while the Nuclear Weapons States have a duty to engage in negotiations leading to the elimination of their nuclear weapons. This was the original bargain of the NPT: no proliferation in exchange for nuclear disarmament.

As frightening as the proliferation of WMD and their possible acquisition by terrorists are, they do not come close to exhausting our disarmament concerns. The spread of conventional weapons, especially in conflict and post-conflict situations in Africa, is extremely concerning. The UN and its Member States must support all disarmament, demobilization and re-integration efforts in Africa and everywhere there is the need of such activities.

Mr Chairman,

In two months, Nairobi will host the First Review Conference of the Anti-Personnel Landmine Convention, also known as the Nairobi Summit for a Mine-Free World. From the beginning, the Holy See supported the process of the Ottawa Convention which has yielded a number of positive results in the fight against anti-personnel mines. Nonetheless, much still needs to be done if humanity is to be set free from these terrible, treacherous devices.

Mr. Chairman, the discussion of the agenda item “culture of peace” has always taken place in the Plenary Assembly, rather than in this Committee, even though its importance to disarmament is evident. While the technical proficiency of arms control negotiators and experts is welcome and necessary, my Delegation would like to emphasize the larger aspects of education and formation, and reiterate its firm commitment to it.

Thank you, Mr Chairman.