Statement by Mr Peter Bonny, First Secretary of the Permanent Mission of the Independent State of Papua New Guinea to the United Nations at the First Committee General Debate

13 October 2014

Mr Chairman

Allow me to congratulate you on your election to preside over the work of the First Committee during the 69th Session of the United Nations General Assembly. My delegation offers its support to you and the Bureau Members.

My delegation also associates itself with the statement presented by the distinguished Ambassador of Indonesia on behalf of the Non-Aligned Movement.

Mr Chairman

While the disarmament issues include Nuclear Weapons and other weapons of mass destruction such as Chemical Weapons, my delegation's main focus will continue to be on Small Arms and Light Weapons. But the successful outcome of debates on these issues are very much dependent on the engagement and participation of nuclear weapon states and other major arms producing states including their full compliance with all the protocols of the relevant treaties.

Mr Chairman

Through the concerted efforts of the United Nations as well as the willingness by relevant parties, much has been gained over the last several years in the concrete reduction of nuclear arms between Russia and United States including other weapons of mass destruction.

A notable achievement of the United Nations in the recent past was the disposal of chemical weapons in Syria.

We note the continuing engagements with the Islamic Republic of Iran and Democratic People's Republic of Korea regarding development of their nuclear technology. This is attributed in part, to open debates and negotiations through multilateralism through the United Nations as well as under other relevant forums.
Papua New Guinea again calls for a peaceful and nuclear free world. However, we support the view that the development of nuclear technology for peaceful purposes with IAEA scrutiny is the inalienable right of every country. Therefore, we call for more openness by all concerned countries to eliminate doubts about their nuclear programs as well as strive to develop this technology for the benefit of all mankind in the areas of health, modern science, food, agriculture and many others.

Mr Chairman

With regards to the proliferation of Small Arms and Light Weapons, Papua New Guinea faces some very difficult challenges. Given the vast unprotected coastal borders, trafficking of arms and light weapons including other illicit materials is extremely difficult to control due to resource and capacity limitations.

Use of illicit weapons in criminal activities including tribal warfare is a growing concern as it negatively impacts on the economic and social development of the country especially in rural areas due to destruction of property and mass migration of people fleeing fighting zones.

Papua New Guinea is doing all it can to prevent smuggling of small arms and light weapons into and throughout the country. This action alone will not assist in curbing the illicit proliferation of small arms and light weapons into the hands of criminals and other non-state actors. It also requires efforts of weapons manufacturing states as well as regional countries to effectively deal with this issue.

On its part, the Papua New Guinea government has increased cooperation with regional police forces to exchange information and monitor movement and activities of people linked to terrorist groups and activities. In this regard, I am pleased to inform this committee that such cooperation has recently detected individuals and groups that may be linked to terrorist groups and the government is taking appropriate action to deal with this issue.

Mr Chairman

The disputes in Ukraine and the conflicts in the Middle East are of major concern to everyone. Terrorists have taken advantage of these conflicts to cause instability and chaos by using conventional weapons to destroy whole towns and cities resulting in the deaths of many innocent civilians.

We fear that such conflicts can escalate between major powers to a much higher and dangerous level. We would call on the Security Council to take the appropriate decisions to de-escalate these situations.

We also support the call by many states and non-governmental organizations for compliance and ratification of the NPT Treaty with the ultimate objective of complete elimination of nuclear weapons.
Mr Chairman

Papua New Guinea supports the Arms Trade Treaty (ATT) and will in due course declare its position on formalization.

Thank you Mr Chairman.