Statement made

By

Ambassador Negash Kebret Botora,
Director for International Organizations Directorate General, Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Federal Democratic Republic of Ethiopia

At

The General Debate of the First Committee of the 69th Session of the United Nations General Assembly

October, 2014
New York
Mr. Chairman,

I would first of all like to congratulate you, Mr. Chairman, and other members of the Bureau on your election to steer our Committee’s work and would also wish to assure you of my delegation’s support and cooperation in discharge of your responsibility. Let me also express our thanks to Libya for successfully conducting our Committee’s deliberations last year.

Mr. Chairman,

My delegation fully associates itself with the statement made by Nigeria on behalf of the African Group. My delegation also extends its appreciation to the Secretary-General for his up-dated reports which contain essential updated information on the agenda items under consideration.

Mr. Chairman,

Multilateralism remains the most reliable setting to comprehensively address critical global issues of international peace and security, including disarmament in its all aspects. Ethiopia firmly believes that continued multilateral engagements and negotiations are vital instruments to curb the proliferation of both conventional and non-conventional weapons, which have increasingly become real threat to maintenance of global peace and security.

Indeed, and as it has been recognized by this committee and other multilateral disarmament forums, the unchecked proliferation of weapons of mass destruction continues to pose great danger to all humanity without distinction. The threats they represent are deadly, and are also very complex in nature. They require, therefore, fundamental and effective global response. Curbing the escalation of nuclear arms race and reducing the stockpile of other weapons of mass destruction through the full and effective implementation of the existing conventions and treaties are of paramount importance. Ethiopia firmly believes
that all states need to respect and implement all disarmament treaties and conventions that they are party to. This is their prime and core obligations they are expected to discharge without further delay and for ensuring the preservation of our world peace and security.

Mr. Chairman,

The African continent has shown its unwavering commitment to regional peace and security through the signing of the African Nuclear-Weapon–Free Zone Treaty and the CTBT by a large number of its member states. The African Nuclear-Weapon-Free Zone treaty seeks to ensure that nuclear weapons are not developed, produced, stockpiled, tested, acquired or stationed in Africa, including its island states. Furthermore, the Treaty prohibits research on nuclear weapons, dumping of radioactive waste, and armed attacks on nuclear installations in the African zone by Treaty parties. In addition, the treaty confirms the basic and inalienable right of all states to the development, research, production and use of nuclear technology for peaceful purposes without discrimination.

That is why Ethiopia supports the universalization and early entry into force of the Comprehensive Nuclear Test Ban Treaty, and in this regard, we call upon those states that have not yet signed or ratified the Treaty to do so as a matter of urgency. We especially call upon the states in annex II of the CTBT and whose ratifications are crucial for the Treaty's entry into force. Ethiopia also welcomes the ratification of this vital treaty by Brunei Darussalam, Chad, Guinea-Bissau, Iraq, Congo Republic and Niue.

Ethiopia, as a signatory to the Comprehensive Nuclear Test Ban Treaty, has been working towards the realization of the purposes and objectives of the treaty in close cooperation with the Preparatory Commission of the CTBTO. The Ministry
of Science and Technology has been designated to coordinate all activities relevant to the implementation and verification of the Treaty.

Mr. Chairman,

We have joined other member states to reaffirm the relevance and importance of the Conference on Disarmament as the sole multilateral disarmament negotiating forum, and are convinced that the impasse on resuming its proper work need to be overcome on urgent and priority basis. Ethiopia as a member of Non-Aligned Movement also supports the UN various General Assembly resolutions on the total elimination of nuclear weapons based on a specified agreed time-frame to reach the goal of achieving a nuclear-weapon-free world through a negotiated and phased program of work.

Ethiopia is committed to ensure that radiation protection and nuclear regulatory control are conducted in pursuance of the applicable domestic and international laws, including the IAEA safety standards. We also wish to stress that the total elimination of nuclear weapons remains the only absolute guarantee against the use or threat of use of nuclear weapons, and reiterate once again our call for providing effective negative assurances to all non-nuclear-weapons states against the use or threat of use of nuclear weapons by nuclear weapons states.

Regarding Illicit trade of small arms and light weapons, we welcome the recent successful conclusion of the Fifth Biennial Meeting of States to consider the Programme of Action to Prevent, Combat and Eradicate the Illicit Trade in Small Arms and Light Weapons in all its aspects held in New York from 16 to 20 June 2014. Unfortunately, illicit small arms and light weapons continue to destabilization and create havoc in many parts of the world, including our sub-region of the Horn of Africa. The unauthorized use of these weapons by non-state actors, and their wide-spread and uncontrolled access to them indeed
remain to be a source of threat and great concern for the states in the region. It is precisely for this reason that implementation of international and regional commitments and treaty-based obligations in respect to combating illicit trafficking in small arms and light weapons is very critical. We are always ready to continue to work with regional states and international community to monitor, control and put an end to the illegal trade and transfer of these weapons.

In conclusion, Mr. Chairman, my delegation wishes to reiterate once again Ethiopia’s unreserved commitment to discharge all its treaty obligations as well as to uphold the pertinent United Nations resolutions relating to various issues of general disarmament, particularly to nuclear weapons and other weapons of mass destruction.

I Thank You.