Statement by Mr. Sainivalati S. Navoti,
(First Secretary)
during the General Debate of the
Disarmament and International Security Committee (First Committee)
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Madam Chair,

Introduction

We are pleased to see you presiding; it is indeed historic - you being the first woman to do so in the sixty one year history of this Committee. Your election and stated desire to continue the improvement of our working methods gives my delegation optimism amidst the grim records of our achievements in the recent past. We congratulate you and the members of your Bureau on your election and assure you Fiji’s full support in work of this Committee, this session.

Fiji is convinced that given our size, geographical location and ability to influence global affairs, there is no more effective way than multilateralism to bring states together, to keep the peace, protect human rights, promote sustainable development and to build negotiated solutions to common problems. It is through this conviction that we find valor to contribute to this debate and to tell the world that what is of concern to the mighty and powerful have bearing and effect and is also of real concern to the weak and isolated.

Nuclear Non Proliferation Treaty (NPT)

Madam Chair,

This Committee resumes its 61st session at the backdrop of a heightened international concern over the expansion of the weapons of mass destruction (WMD) - particularly nuclear weapons. As a party to NPT, Fiji laments the fact that large stocks of nuclear weapons continue to exist and some are still keen to develop even more sophisticated and greater arsenals of such weapons. The expansion of vertical proliferation to include countries other than the five traditional nuclear weapon states and the persistent danger of horizontal proliferation is made worse by the real threat of having these weapons fall into the hands of non state actors.

Fiji and other countries in our region enjoy a cordial and satisfactory relation with our dialogue partners in as far as the implementation and observance of the South Pacific Nuclear – Free Zone Treaty is concerned. We could only encourage the replication of such arrangement to other zones and therefore welcome initiatives of the Central Asian States towards this end.
Madam Chair,

Fiji supports all efforts to safeguard the international nuclear non-proliferation regime. We encourage dialogue and believe that opportunities for diplomatic avenues within the framework of international law, relevant multilateral conventions and the UN Charter ought to be exhaustively taken advantage of. We look forward to the commencement of the next NPT Review Process and express our confidence that through lesson learnt, measurable and substantive progress will be achieved.

**Comprehensive Nuclear Test Ban Treaty (CTBT)**

Madam Chair,

It is always important to recall the devastating effects of nuclear weapons testing on human health and the environment. Equally crucial is the importance of the CTBT in preventing such damage in the future. Despite overwhelming international support for the CTBT and the many ways it contributes to our security, Fiji like others, mourns the fact that without the signatures and ratification of those key states that are required by Article XIV to effect entry into force of the CTBT, no real certainty can be realized in nuclear disarmament and non-proliferation.

Madam Chair,

Incidentally, 2006 marks the 10th anniversary of the adoption of the CTBT. Fiji notes and warmly welcomes the ratification earlier this year of the CTBT by our Asian Group neighbor Vietnam and encourages others to follow suit.

**Small Arms and Light Weapons (SALW)**

Madam Chair,

It is widely accepted that small arms may not have the same terrible cataclysmic potential as weapon of mass destruction; nonetheless, it has been proven that they are responsible for the overwhelming number of lives lost around the globe and has quite simply become an everyday WMD. Fiji continues to be gravely concerned about the accumulation and uncontrolled spread of small arms and light weapons in many regions of the world including the Pacific. We have our own regrettable story regarding the costs of their misuse and we therefore welcome all efforts being undertaken both in regional and sub regional level as well as in this multilateral forum on curbing illegal trading of small arms and light weapons.

Our failure to agree on an outcome document at the UN Programme of Action Review Conference in July, lamentable as it was, must not deter our collective resolve to continue our common fight to comprehensively address the nature of the small arms problem in all its aspects. Fiji commends and lends its support to efforts aimed at promoting wider understanding between states on the need for global guidelines for transfer controls of SALW and the document we collectively negotiated at the Review Conference remains in our assessment the only UN document which contains a complete catalogue of such measures.

**Conclusion**

Madam Chair,
Much remains to be achieved in the disarmament and non-proliferation machinery. This Committee was sourly reminded on Monday by the Under Secretary General for Disarmament Affairs 9 major setbacks of the past year. Though there have been a number of modest achievements- lack of progress does certainly reflect the current environment facing disarmament issues. Fiji is among those who choose to remain optimistic about the future; we invite the major players in this field to demonstrate their political will to move forward. Security is our collective responsibility.

Thank You, Madam.