STATEMENT

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ON AGENDA ITEM 87 k

"THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN DISARMAMENT AND DEVELOPMENT"

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Madam Chairperson,

Let me start by expressing my delegation’s appreciation to the Secretary General’s latest report on the pivotal issues of Peace, Security and Development. It is within this overarching context that I am making the present statement, namely: the relationship between disarmament and development, under agenda item 87k, which falls within the framework of the committee’s thematic cluster debate being conducted now.

Madam Chairperson,

Much has been said about the symbiotic relationship between the pertinent issues of disarmament and development based on the generally agreeable premises that the two can be, and should be, made interdependent and mutually reinforcing. There is no doubt that disarmament creates a conducive situation whereby development objectives could be better achieved at national, regional and international levels. Conversely speaking, an excessive investment on armaments can negatively affect development endeavors by diverting and draining financial, human and other resources that could have been utilized otherwise.

We can hardly talk of development in the midst of arms race and armed conflicts. Thus, it is a point of no argument that for any economic or social development agenda to be successfully effected, peace and security remain to be the utmost priority, particularly for the developing world, where each and every measure in the direction of disarmament can create and nurture an ideal environment for development, so as to take hold and benefit the poor.

Madam Chairperson,

As it has been witnessed since the adoption, on 11 September 1987, of the final document of the International Conference on the Relationship between Disarmament and Development, particularly in the 1990s, spending on armaments by individual countries were beginning to show signs of reduction. This was indeed considered to be a positive development to ensure long-term national, regional and global stability, security, as well as equitable prosperity. However, starting from the dawn of the 21st century, there have been indications that military expenditures of many countries are back on the rise. The possible impact of this trend on the overall global economy and the fight against poverty has been a source of concern, and even frustration for the pro-disarmament activists and development partners alike.

Over the past several years, the United Nations has passed numerous resolutions calling for the diversion of scarce resources from military expenditures to the socio-economic development of developing countries. Moreover, various lofty global development schemes, including the Millennium Development Goals, have been agreed upon, and are at the offering in terms of their implementation. But, these would all be
unattainable by poor countries in the absence of a mutually shared vision, concern and, above all, the political will and determination to act for the realization of their objectives.

Madam Chairperson,

Even though some might still be of the view that disarmament per se can not lead to development, the positive contributions that disarmament makes in terms of promoting an environment of security, and boosting economic strength remain to be crucial for development. It calls for no evidence that the overall cost of global military expenditure, as stated on many occasions, is still standing exceedingly high at the expense of social and economic development activities. My delegation believes that, for our common wish of seeing a better world tomorrow, the matter should be given serious consideration now by all states alike, including through our Committee's current deliberation. To this end, the United Nations bears a profound responsibility, and indeed plays an indispensable role, in ensuring that developing countries, particularly LDC’s, are provided with better access to adequate and sustainable financial and technical assistance, so as to be able to meet their national development objectives, withstand the complex challenges of globalization, and defeat poverty with all its evils.

Madame Chairperson,

As a staunch believer in both disarmament and development, and as a devoted member of the NAM, Ethiopia, for its part, has been a fervent supporter of this very agenda and continues to promote it in the future in collaboration with all those who partake the vision and the stakes involved. While upholding the principles of disarmament and non-proliferation, as it has been doing thus far, it remains single-mindedly focused on multifaceted domestic development activities, to which all valuable resources, available from both internal and external sources, are being channeled and prudently utilized with aim of attaining both national growth targets and the MDGs. It is due to this unwavering commitment of her that Ethiopia continues to uphold the banner of peace, despite the present loud and clear threat to use brute force against her sovereignty by the coalition of extremists and an irresponsible state in our sub-region.

In conclusion, Madam Chairperson, I would like to reaffirm Ethiopia's firm commitment to discharge all its treaty obligations, as well as to uphold the United Nations resolutions hitherto adopted in the area of disarmament, more importantly on the relationship between disarmament and development, out of its principled position regarding these issues, coupled with its vehement determination and last-ditch struggle to overcome poverty and economic backwardness.

I thank you