MALAWI

STATEMENT

BY

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AT THE

THEMATIC DEBATE ON CONVENTIONAL WEAPONS OF THE FIRST COMMITTEE DURING THE 64TH REGULAR SESSION OF THE UNITED NATIONS GENERAL ASSEMBLY

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(Check against delivery)
Mr. Chairman,

As this is the first time that Malawi is taking the floor, let me at the outset congratulate you and your bureau for your election as Chairman of the First Committee. My delegation wishes to assure you of our support during your tenure as Chairman of this Committee.

Mr. Chairman,

My delegation wishes to join delegations that have spoken before us in this Committee in applauding recent promising signs towards addressing the long outstanding issues of disarmament. It is pleasing to note that the Conference on Disarmament, which has been ineffective during the past few years is now ready with a programme of work to look at several issues that are crucial to disarmament. Furthermore, the Security Council meeting on Disarmament last May and the recent decision by the Presidents of Russia and the United States to pursue further reductions in their strategic arms is a welcome development as it gives new impetus to the disarmament program.

Mr. Chairman,

In spite of this positive momentum, the proliferation of small arms and light weapons is another issue which continues to have a devastating impact on the lives of civilians around the world. In the case of Malawi small arms are used in armed robberies. As a result people feel insecure and investors are scared to proceed with their investment. In this regard small weapons are as much a danger to our national security as are the weapons of mass destruction. Our community policing policy has not been able to sufficiently deal with the rising crime that has been exacerbated by the uncontrolled availability of small arms and light weapons. I am certain that this problem is also prevalent in other African countries. In this regard we wish to call on the international community to demonstrate commitment
to check this menace in doubling their efforts by implementing existing initiatives aimed at combating the illicit manufacture and trade in small arms and light weapons. In particular we call for the full implementation of the United Nations Programme of Action on Small Arms and Light Weapons.

Mr. Chairman,

In addition, Malawi supports the efforts towards the negotiation of a comprehensive binding Arms Trade Treaty. Our vision is for an effective arms trade treaty aimed at regulating the manufacture of and trade in small arms, light weapons and their ammunitions as well as regulating the transfer of those weapons particularly where there is a risk of armed violence including terrorism and a violation of international human rights law and international humanitarian law.

In this regard we welcome the open and constructive exchange of views during the two sessions of the Open-ended Working Group, which were held in March and June this year and are encouraged by the positive will to address the problem caused by the unregulated trade and transfer of arms.

Mr. Chairman,

Malawi attaches great importance to the implementation of the Convention on the Prohibition of the Use, Stockpiling, Production and Transfer of Anti-Personnel Mines and on Their Destruction even though we are not greatly affected by the scourge of landmines. We note with appreciation that trade in these weapons is slowing and a large amount of land is being cleared annually and returned to productive use in many countries affected by land mines. We applaud the success of the Treaty as we now note that trade in these weapons is slowing and a large amount of land is being cleared annually and returned to productive use in many countries affected by landmines.
We support the convening of the Second Review Conference of States Parties to the Convention that will take place in Cartagena, Colombia at the end of this year. We hope that this conference will be able to consolidate some of the implementation provisions such as victim assistance, mine clearance and stockpile destruction.

As for the Convention on Cluster Munitions, Malawi reaffirmed its commitment by signing the Convention this year and urges other Member States that have not yet signed to do so in order to stop the serious violation of international humanitarian laws associated with the use of these weapons.

Mr. Chairman,

Let me conclude by reaffirming Malawi’s commitment for general and complete disarmament. My delegation remains ready to work with you and other Member States towards achieving a positive and successful outcome of the mandate of this Committee.

I thank you.