Statement

By

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At the

GENERAL DEBATE OF THE FIRST COMMITTEE
OF THE 65TH SESSION OF THE UNITED
NATIONS GENERAL ASSEMBLY

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Mr. Chairman,

At the outset, permit me to join other speakers in congratulating both you and other members of the Bureau on your election to steer the affairs of the Committee during this 65th Session. Please be assured of the fullest support and cooperation of my delegation in the discharge of your duties.

My delegation fully aligns itself with the statements delivered earlier by Indonesia, on behalf of NAM, and Nigeria, on behalf of the African Group. I do not intend to repeat what many speakers before me have said but only seek to make a few comments from my national perspective.

Mr. Chairman,

There is no doubt that the year 2010 has, thus far, witnessed a number of positive and encouraging developments within the international security and disarmament realms.

Firstly, in May, 2010 the international community came together during the 8th Review Conference of the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT) and managed to set aside their national interests and differences in order to achieve a modicum of consensus, as contained in the “Conclusions and Recommendations for Follow-Up Actions” section of the Final Document.

In our view, the outcome of the Conference and the renewed spirit of cooperation emanating thereof needs to be harnessed by the comity of nations to ensure that concrete political action is taken towards our ultimate goal of achieving a world free of nuclear weapons.

Mr. Chairman,

In June, 2010, we also witnessed the successful conclusion of the 4th Biennial Meeting of States [BMS4] to consider the Implementation of the Programme of Action on Small Arms and Light Weapons [SALW]. The importance of the meeting cannot be over-emphasized by my delegation. Coming from a sub-region that has experienced the havoc and mayhem caused by the illicit trafficking and easy availability of SALW, we remain convinced that they are indeed the real weapons of mass destruction of our peoples.
For developing countries such as Ghana, the illicit proliferation of SALW continues to pose a threat to our national security and socio-economic and political stability, given its close linkage to terrorism, organized crime, drugs and human trafficking, among others. The unanimity of purpose demonstrated during BMS4 should guide us to do what is right for our people by ensuring the full implementation of the UN POA.

Although there is no doubt that the 2001 UN Programme of Action and other Regional Protocols and Conventions adopted thereafter have played a major role in combating the scourge of SALW, much work remains to be done. In this direction, we look forward to participating actively and constructively in the Open-Ended Meeting of Governmental Experts on SALW scheduled to be held in May, 2011.

Mr. Chairman

Ghana fully supports the attainment of an Arms Trade Treaty (ATT), hence our satisfaction with the outcome of the ATT PrepComm held in New York in July, 2010. We view a strong and effective Arms Trade Treaty (ATT) as an essential step in preventing conventional arms transfers to destinations where they are likely to be used to commit human rights violations, fuel conflict and undermine national or regional development.

Of specific significance to my delegation is the need for the treaty to include a comprehensive system for controlling the cross-border movement of all conventional arms, ammunition and associated equipment, as well as covering the import, export, transit and trans-shipment and brokerage of all conventional weapons. The ATT should, importantly, also close any loopholes that allow conventional weapons to flow from the legitimate to the illicit market.

We also hold the position that the ATT must incorporate a provision for ensuring that transfers of conventional weapons remain under national control, and that States guarantee that all international transfers of conventional weapons from their jurisdictions are subjected to strict control and licensing, in line with internationally agreed and verifiable standards.
Mr. Chairman,

Ghana remains resolute in its commitment to the global effort to attain a world free of nuclear weapons. Accordingly, my delegation welcomes the coming into force of the African Nuclear Weapons Free Zone [the Pelindaba Treaty] and is pleased to report that efforts are continuing at the national level for the Treaty to be ratified as soon as practicable.

In this same vein, my delegation wishes to encourage the nuclear weapon states (NWS), particularly the United States and Russia, to take the requisite steps to sign and ratify the respective protocols of the Pelindaba Treaty and work with other signatory countries to ensure that the African region remains a nuclear weapons free zone.

Mr. Chairman,

It is the hope of my delegation that this session of the First Committee will be characterized by free, frank, and even-handed negotiations. We, as representatives of our respective peoples, need to demonstrate that we are genuinely committed to advancing the cause of international peace, security and disarmament for the benefit of posterity.

I thank you.