Statement by Ambassador Mohamed H. Hamza, Director of Foreign Affairs Office in Zanzibar, Ministry of Foreign Affairs and International Cooperation of the United Republic of Tanzania, during the First Committee Deliberations on Nuclear Weapons

New York, 13th October, 2010
Mr. Chairman,

I am honoured to speak on this important cluster of nuclear weapons to share with the meeting the disarmament perspectives of my delegation.

At the outset, I should commend you for the excellent manner in which you continue to steer our deliberations.

My delegation associates itself with the inspiring statements delivered on behalf of the Non-Aligned Movement and the African Group.

We also align ourselves with the consensus of this Committee which calls for the immediate, complete, and irreversible disarmament and non-proliferation of all nuclear weapons and other weapons of mass destruction. This represents the crux of our pledge, made 65 years ago – “to save succeeding generations from the scourge of war which twice in our life time has brought untold sorrow to mankind”.

Mr. Chairman,

The circle of insecurity and fear that nuclear weapons could one day be deployed in an armed conflict is made worse by the world-wide presence of nuclear weapons. It is a bitter fact that for as long as some countries continue to possess these weapons; others will continue to seek them. It is also obvious that such a situation raises the possibility of the weapons or related technology falling into the hands of terrorists and other non-state actors.

Under the current state of affairs, any attempt to prevent or disarm a state with nuclear weapons discriminately will be viewed with suspicion because how does one attempt to remove a speck of sawdust in their brother’s eye while paying little or no attention to the plank in their own eye? Aren’t these the questions being asked by some delegates in this very meeting?
Mr. Chairman,

We have a moral obligation to rid the world of nuclear weapons which have had a devastating effect on mankind twice in the last century. It was as a result of such devastations that we said: never again! A durable and ultimate guarantee that these weapons will never be deployed is through their total and irreversible elimination.

We welcome the signing of the new Strategic Arms Reduction Treaty (START) agreement between the USA and the Russian Federation, which, upon ratification will see further reductions in their strategic nuclear arsenals. We call on other nuclear states to compliment these noble efforts, which hopefully would one day deliver us to the dream of "global zero".

We also welcome numerous resolutions and decisions of the General Assembly on this topic. We should not allow the gist of our commitments, in these resolutions, that, we have consistently adopted for over two decades, to go to waste. That would simply be a betrayal of our moral posture.

Mr. Chairman,

We also have a legal obligation to rid the world of nuclear weapons. The threat posed by the presence of these weapons and possibility that they could be deployed is simply illegal and unacceptable. These were the words of the International Court of Justice in its advisory opinion rendered in 1996 on the question of "the Legality of the Threat or Use of Nuclear Weapons".

We are pleased that the establishment of the African and other Nuclear Weapons Free Zones have added a stronger voice to the opinion of the Court. We perceive these zones as a means of ensuring non-possession, non-use or threat of use; and non-proliferation of these weapons within the said zones. As pronounced in our general statement, the establishment of such a zone in the Middle East, with the involvement of all states in the region as envisaged by the Outcome Document of the NPT Review Conference in May 2010 and in accordance with the 1995 resolution of the NPT Review Conference, will contribute effectively to international peace and security.
We welcome the successful conclusion of the NPT Review Conference and call on all states to implement in good faith, the five practical steps proposed by the Secretary General for achieving complete disarmament, non-proliferation and peaceful uses of nuclear technology, without discrimination. We welcome on board all non-state parties to the Treaty and call on existing parties to refrain from violating this indispensable disarmament and non-proliferation regime.

Mr. Chairman,

Let me conclude by stressing that; time and conditions are ripe for accelerating progress in disarmament in general and nuclear disarmament in particular. We should seize the opportunities availed to us by ensuring the universalisation of the NPT; the immediate and unconditional ratification of the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty, particularly by the Annex 2 States; commencement of negotiations on the Fissile Material Cut-off Treaty (FMCT); negative security assurances and ultimately the Nuclear Weapons Convention under the revitalised Conference on Disarmament (CD).

Our goal should remain one of ridding the world of nuclear weapons, while promoting the developmental and peaceful uses of nuclear energy, in an equitable and non-discriminatory manner. Instead of building nuclear arsenals we should strengthen international cooperation, particularly technical cooperation in nuclear related technologies that would create conducive conditions for accelerating economic growth and eradicate poverty. It is our duty to promote lawful and responsible transfer of such technologies and resources as a means of addressing the resource gap persisting between the North and the South. A world free of nuclear weapons would be a common good for global peace, security and prosperity of all mankind. It would be a better world for all of us.

Mr. Chairman
Disarmament is achievable and we pledge to do our part.

I thank you for listening.