Statement by H.E. Mr. Gyan Chandra Acharya, Ambassador/Permanent Representative of Nepal to the United Nations at the General Debate of the First Committee during 66th Session of the UN General Assembly New York, 6 October 2011

Mr. Chairman,

I congratulate you, Mr. Chairman, and other members on election to the Bureau of the Committee. I assure you of my delegation’s full support in discharging its important responsibilities.

My delegation associates itself with the statement made by Indonesia on behalf of the Non-aligned Movement.

Mr. Chairman,

Nepal consistently advocates for general and complete disarmament of all weapons of mass destruction including biological, chemical, nuclear, radiological weapons in a time bound manner. In 1945, for the first time in human history, the world witnessed the devastating impacts of the nuclear technology used for the purpose of war. One can only imagine how catastrophic it could be if nuclear arsenal of today were to be used in the theatre of war. This realization alone should prod us all for substantive, immediate and credible steps towards nuclear disarmament. As a party to NPT and CWC, Nepal strongly believes in the elimination of nuclear weapons to attain nuclear disarmament and non-proliferation once and for all. Declaration of nuclear weapon free zones by concluding a binding treaty is a laudable step which would contribute towards the stepwise denuclearization of the world.

The forward-looking action plan adopted by the 2010 NPT Review Conference rekindled the hope for progress in all three pillars: disarmament, non-proliferation, and peaceful uses of nuclear energy. They are interrelated and they must be dealt with collectively to ensure a better and safer world for all us and future generations. But complacency is the greatest threat to progress in all these pillars. We believe that 2012 conference on WMD Free Zone in the Middle East would be an important opportunity to move ahead in establishing peace in the Middle East.
The growing availability of small arms and light weapons in the conflict zones is a matter of serious concern. Conflict is the very antithesis of development. And the small arms have played havoc to the lives of the common people around the world. Nepal fully supports the effective implementation of the Program of Action to Prevent, Combat and Eradicate the Illicit Trade in Small Arms and Light Weapons. We support the adoption of a legally binding instrument to regulate international arms transfer for transparency and accountability. Nepal stands for prevention of arms race in the outer space.

The Conference on Disarmament, a single multilateral disarmament negotiating forum, must be revitalized without delay to advance multilateral disarmament negotiations including on the Fissile Materials Cut-Off Treaty (FMCT). Time has also come to think about necessary reforms in the working procedures and expansion of the membership of the CD.

We believe that convening of the Fourth Special Session of the General Assembly on Disarmament (SSOD-IV) would be an important step to take stock of the existing disarmament agenda and machinery in a holistic manner and devise a future course of actions.

Mr. Chairman,

We tend to look at the issue of disarmament in a comprehensive manner and across the board. Disarmament is not urgent from a moral perspective alone, but it is also important from economic perspective. Article 26 of the Charter of the United Nations envisions the least diversion of the world’s human and economic resources for armaments. But we are saddened to learn that the global military expenditure today stands at over US$1.6 trillion, and has been rising in recent years despite the global financial and economic crises.

The Final Document of the International Conference on the Relationship between Disarmament and Development convened in 1987 had urged the international community to devote a greater part of their resources to economic and social development while keeping the military expenditure at the lowest possible level. And every year we renew our commitment in this Committee by adopting a resolution on the ‘relationship between disarmament and development’ by consensus. Regrettably, we fail to keep our commitment.

Much to our dismay, the world continues to squander so much money on military expenditures but we invest so meagerly in peace, development and international cooperation. The UN’s entire budget is just a tiny fraction of the world’s military expenditure, let alone the budget spent for peacebuilding and economic recovery.
Mr. Chairman,

Nepal strongly believes that regional mechanisms complement efforts to promote the global disarmament agenda. The Regional Centre for Peace and Disarmament for Asia and the Pacific (RCPD) located in Kathmandu is making efforts to promote regional discussions on important disarmament agenda. Given the importance of the Asia-Pacific region as well as the agenda, we believe that the "Kathmandu Process" needs to be revitalised to facilitate dialogue and deliberations on many contemporary challenges including confidence building in the region. As the host of the Centre, Nepal is fully committed to strengthening the Centre as an effective United Nations regional entity in building regional understanding and confidence in the region for peace and disarmament.

It is in this perspective that we call for an enhanced level of support to the Centre from the international community, particularly the member states from Asia and the Pacific region to enhance the importance of the work of the Centre. It holds a great potential for concrete achievements in peace and disarmament related issues.

As in the previous years, Nepal along with other cosponsoring countries, will be tabling a resolution on “United Nations Regional Centre for Peace and Disarmament in Asia and the Pacific” at the current Session of the Committee, for which support from all delegations will be highly appreciated.

In conclusion, Mr. Chairman, multilateral approach should be at the centre of advancing non-proliferation and disarmament and promoting international peace and security. This Committee, being a truly multilateral and inclusive deliberative forum, has an important role to play in steering the course of deliberations to broaden understanding, create consensus and build confidence amongst Member States. We would support the work of the committee with a view to achieving tangible progress in the fields of peace, security and disarmament.

I thank you.