Statement by
H.E. Ambassador Araya Desta,
Permanent Representative of Eritrea to the United Nations,
during the
"General Debate" of the First Committee
67th Session of the United Nation General Assembly
Mr. Chairman,

Let me join the distinguished delegates who spoke before me in congratulating you and other members of the Bureau on your election to steer the work of this important Committee. We are confident that your experienced leadership will lead us into successful outcome. I assure you of my delegation’s full support.

My delegation fully aligns itself with the statements made by the distinguished representative of Islamic Republic of Iran on behalf of the Non-Aligned Movement and the distinguished representative of Nigeria on behalf of the African Group. I wish to add the following brief remarks in my national capacity.

Mr. Chairman,

Almost a century after the nascent attempt by the League of Nations to rid the world of deadly weapons, we are still far from achieving this noble objective. The enormous stockpile of deadly weapons of mass destruction and unregulated conventional arms continue to pose an existential threat to humanity. The threats weapons of mass destruction and conventional arms to humanity are real and global. No country acting alone can secure its border and citizens in the increasingly globalized world.

In this connection, Eritrea stress that regional and international security and issues of disarmament are best addressed through multilaterally negotiated, transparent, comprehensive and non-discriminatory instruments. Eritrea supports the various international instruments that aim at a complete, verifiable and irreversible disarmament covering all weapons.

It is regrettable that over the years we have not been able to move of the question of the Conference on Disarmament. Our shared future must compel us to demonstrate the necessary political will to agree on the core agenda and to immediately commence the substantive discussions on disarmament matters.

Mr. Chairman,

In many parts of Africa, small arms and light weapons continue to fuel conflicts, exacerbate crimes, divert much needed resources and perpetuate regional insecurity. The successful outcome of the Second Review Conference of the UN Program of Action to Prevent, Combat and Eradicate the Illicit Trade in Small Arms and Light Weapons in All Its Aspects, last August, is an important development. The implementation of the Program of Action is primarily the responsibility of national governments; yet, the nature of the trading in illicit arms and light weapons which often transcend national boundaries require regional response. Eritrea believes that strengthening the institutional capacities of regional arrangements would meaningfully advance the objective of curbing illicit trade in small arms and light weapons.

As a signatory to the Nairobi Declaration on the Problem of the Proliferation of Illicit Small Arms and Light Weapons in the Great Lakes Region and the Horn of Africa and an active member of Regional Center on Small Arms (RECSA), Eritrea will continue to closely work with the sisterly countries in the region to eradicated the illicit trade in small arms and light weapons from the Horn of Africa.
Mr. Chairman,

While the UN Conference on Arms Trade Treaty did not achieve its stated objectives, it is Eritrea’s view that the constructive engagement by delegates during the month long process is a sign of a general support. Such an instrument if it is balanced, non-discriminatory and resistant to any political abuse, then it can be an important tool in preventing and eradicating illegal arms transfer.

As we prepare for another possible conference, Eritrea stresses that any potential treaty must be a result of comprehensive and transparent inter-governmental process. Any future treaty must not infringe on the inalienable right of every state to acquire, manufacture, stockpile, and import arms for self-defense as stipulated in Article 51 of the UN Charter.

Mr. Chairman,

The existence of nuclear weapons continues to pose great danger to humankind. Eritrea believes the sole guarantee against the use, threat of use and proliferation of nuclear weapons is their total elimination. It is the view of my delegation that we intensify our efforts to implement, in a balanced manner, the three pillars set forth in the Action Plan of the NPT review Conference of 2010.

The use or threat of use of nuclear weapons is illegal and unethical. Eritrea believes, pending the realization of general and complete disarmament, the nuclear weapon states must give security assurances to non-nuclear weapons states from the use and threat of use nuclear weapon, and will support any effort to a legally binding negative security assurance. Eritrea is one of the early parties to Comprehensive Nuclear-Test Ban Treaty (CTBT) and considers that its entry to force will be a critical step towards total elimination of nuclear weapons.

My country is a signatory to the Pelindaba Treaty which established Africa as nuclear free zone. The establishment of such treaties in other regions will have an important contribution towards attaining a world free of nuclear weapons.

Mr. Chairman,

Nuclear technology can indeed play an important role in sustainable development, including the attainment of internationally agreed development goals. Eritrea supports the inalienable right of every state to develop and/or acquire nuclear technology for peaceful use and in accordance to the IAEA comprehensive safeguards agreements and additional protocols.

My delegation commends the activities of the IAEA which is making remarkable contribution in socio-economic progress of developing countries. In Eritrea, the IAEA support, in livestock production, particularly the fight against Brucellosis and Tuberculosis has been significant.

Mr. Chairman,

In conclusion, let me stress that experience has shown that weapons only fuel insecurity. Thus, disarmament is the only viable tool for a more secure planet. Eritrea believes international and regional security can only be realized through pacific settlement of disputes and global economic cooperation. In this regard, the reform of international institutions is an important leap forward.

Thank you!