Statement by Mr Deepak Dhital, Joint Secretary, Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Nepal at the General Debate of the First Committee during the 67th Session of the General Assembly

New York, 15 October 2012

Mr. Chairman,

At the outset, allow me to congratulate you on your election to the chairmanship of the First Committee of the 67th Session of the UN General Assembly. I would also like to extend my congratulations to other members of the Bureau. I assure you of my delegation's full support and cooperation in the discharge of your responsibilities.

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

Mr. Chairman,

Nepal believes that disarmament bears crucial importance not only in the maintenance of global peace and security, but also in unleashing valuable resources for useful purposes, particularly for the cause of development that can provide real freedom and prosperity to all the peoples of the world.

Nepal has been consistently advocating for general and complete disarmament of all weapons of mass destruction including nuclear, radiological, biological and chemical weapons in a time-bound manner. The world witnessed in 1945 the catastrophic impact of nuclear technology used for the purpose of war. It is not difficult to imagine what sort of destruction and devastation is going to be invited if the nuclear arsenal of today were to be used in the arena of war. A serious introspection into this reality can easily guide all of us 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.

While appreciating the declaration of nuclear weapons-free zones established by international treaties in various parts of the world, we welcome the convening of the conference on the establishment of a zone free from nuclear weapons and all weapons of mass destruction in the Middle East in the later part of 2012.
As the NPT constitutes the cornerstone of global nuclear non-proliferation regime, its review process should take a comprehensive approach to look into the progress achieved in all the three mutually reinforcing pillars of the treaty regime: disarmament, non-proliferation and peaceful uses of nuclear energy. The 8th NPT Review conference in 2010 was successful to break ground and adopt a consensus document containing an action plan. It has rekindled hope for global disarmament and non-proliferation. To take the spirit forward, the first Preparatory Committee meeting of the 2015 NPT Review Conference was successfully held in Vienna in May this year.

The Chemical Weapons Convention, which provides non-discriminatory, comprehensive and verifiable prohibition of all categories of chemical weapons, is an important instrument towards eliminating weapons of mass destruction. Nepal urges an early elimination of all stockpiles of chemical weapons. We look forward to the 3rd Review Conference of the State Parties to the Chemical Weapons Convention to be held next year.

Nepal strongly believes that promotion of multilateralism, wider confidence-building measures and the pursuit of collective security constitute essential prerequisites for achieving the ultimate goals of disarmament. The Conference on Disarmament (CD), which is the single multilateral disarmament negotiating forum, is in need of revitalization for advancing the multilateral disarmament negotiations for more concrete actions and results. The CD process calls for political will, creativity and courage to overcome inertia and take momentum in negotiations involving such issues of common concerns as the Fissile Materials Cut-off Treaty (FMCT) and prevention of arms race in outer space.

Mr. Chairman,

International regulation in the trade of conventional arms through legally binding instrument is a felt need of our time. Regrettfully, the United Nations Conference on Arms Trade Treaty (ATT) held in July this year could not reach an agreement on the terms of the Treaty. The ATT is necessary for accountability and transparency in the transfer of conventional weapons and curbing illicit trade of arms and their diversion into the wrong hands. Nepal is for an early conclusion of a comprehensive and robust Arms Trade Treaty. In our view, ATT should adopt the highest possible common international standards for the import, export and transfer of conventional arms while ensuring the right of all States to manufacture, develop, acquire, import, export, transfer and retain conventional arms for self-defence and security needs.

The proliferation of illicit trade in small arms and light weapons has taken the lives of millions and become a source for sustaining conflicts and exacerbating armed violence in troubled areas of the world, apart from its deep nexus with the transnational organized crimes. In this connection, we are encouraged by the fact that the recently held second United Nations
Review Conference on the Programme of Action on Trafficking of Small Arms and Light Weapons adopted a consensus outcome document highlighting the international community’s renewed commitment to preventing, combating and eradicating the illicit trade.

Global military expenditure today stands at over US $1.7 trillion and is still rising despite the global financial and economic crisis. It is an irony that so much money is squandered in military expenditures while the investment in peace, development and international cooperation is only a tiny fraction of that.

Mr. Chairman,

Nepal strongly believes that regional mechanisms play an important complementary role in the promotion of global agenda on peace and disarmament. The United Nations Regional Centre for Peace and Disarmament (RCPD) located in Kathmandu is making good endeavors to promote regional discourses on important agenda of peace and disarmament. The Asia-Pacific region bears unique prospects and challenges in the promotion of global peace. We believe that the 'Kathmandu Process' needs to be revitalized to facilitate dialogues and deliberations for fostering understanding, cooperation and confidence-building for the cause of peace in the region. As the host of the RCPD, Nepal is committed to strengthening the regional centre to make it an effective UN entity dedicated to the promotion of peace and disarmament at the regional level.

The Centre relies on voluntary contributions of donors for enhancing its activities. In this context, we call for enhanced level of support to the centre from the international community, especially by the member states from Asia Pacific region, to carry on all important work of the centre.

As in the previous years, Nepal along with other co-sponsoring 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. We appreciate the continued support from all the delegations towards this end.

Mr. Chairman,

To conclude, we believe that multilateral approach is best suited for the advancement of disarmament and non-proliferation as well as promotion of peace and security. The First Committee is an inclusive multilateral forum that can play an immensely important role in steering the course of deliberations to broaden understanding, create consensus and build confidence among Member States for the greater cause of peace, security and disarmament.

Thank you!