STATEMENT
BY
H.E. Mr. MOURAD BENMEHIDI
PERMANENT REPRESENTATIVE
OF
ALGERIA TO THE UNITED NATIONS

AT
THE GENERAL DEBATE
OF THE FIRST COMMITTEE

****

New York, 8 October 2013
Mr. Chairman,

At the outset, allow me to say how I am pleased to congratulate you for your election as the Chair of the First Committee for the 68th UNGA session. We look forward to a productive and fruitful session under your able leadership. You can count on my delegation’s full support and cooperation. Let me also congratulate the other members of the Bureau on their election.

My delegation aligns itself with the statements delivered by Indonesia on behalf of the Non-Aligned Movement and by Nigeria on behalf of the African Group as well as the statement made by Bahrain on behalf of the Arab Group.

Algeria attaches utmost importance to general and complete disarmament as a means to ensure international peace and security and reiterates his commitment to the multilateral diplomacy in the field of disarmament and international security. During the year 2013, we have seen renewed efforts, proposals and initiatives devoted to addressing a wide range of issues in this area. Some of them will be discussed in depth during this session of our Committee.

As State-party to the main treaties related to nuclear weapons and weapons of mass destruction, Algeria reaffirms that nuclear disarmament remains its highest priority and expresses its serious concern over the danger to humanity posed by the existence of nuclear weapons and of their possible use or threat of use. Therefore, there is the need for substantive progress in multilateral nuclear disarmament.

Mr. Chairman,

My delegation would like to seize this opportunity to stress again the need to universalize the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT), the cornerstone of the nuclear disarmament and non-proliferation regimes, and to ensure compliance with each of its three pillars: disarmament, non-proliferation and the promotion of the peaceful use of nuclear energy.

A majority of States have chosen to use atomic energy for exclusive civilian applications, in accordance with Article IV of the NPT. Indeed, the nuclear energy represents for many developing countries a strategic choice for their economic development and energy security needs. Accordingly, my
delegation reaffirms the legitimate right to develop research, produce and use of nuclear energy for peaceful purposes under the non-proliferation regime.

Concerned by the lack of progress towards the implementation of the 2010 Action Plan as expressed during the Second session of the Preparatory Committee for the 2015 NPT Review Conference held in Geneva, Switzerland, earlier this year, Algeria calls on all States Parties to the NPT to implement this Action Plan adopted by consensus at the Eighth NPT Review Conference in May 2010. According to the terms of the NPT, Nuclear Weapons States have, in particular, to fully comply with their special obligations.

Convinced that the total elimination of nuclear weapons is the only absolute guarantee against their use or threat of use, Algeria supports, in this regard, the roadmap proposed by the NAM during the High Level Meeting on Nuclear Disarmament held few days ago which calls mainly for the early commencement of negotiations, in the Conference on Disarmament, on a comprehensive convention on nuclear weapons.

Until that goal is achieved, my delegation wishes to reiterate the need for the conclusion of a legally binding instrument on Negative Security Assurances to all Non-Nuclear-Weapon States. Algeria wishes also to stress the importance of achieving universal adherence to the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test Ban Treaty in order to allow its entry into force. The achievement of such objective will contribute to the process of nuclear disarmament.

Algeria welcomes the convening of the Oslo Conference on the Humanitarian Impact of Nuclear Weapons, held in March 2013 which will be followed by the Second Conference to be held in Mexico in February 2014.

Mr. Chairman,

As the establishment of nuclear-weapon-free-zones is an important measure towards achieving nuclear disarmament and non-proliferation objectives, the entry into force on 15 July 2009 of the Pelindaba Treaty establishing a nuclear weapons-free zone in Africa represents an important contribution in this regard.
Algeria, which was among the first countries to have signed and ratified the Treaty of Pelindaba, calls on, in particular, States with nuclear weapons, which have not yet done so, to sign and ratify the relevant Annexes of this Treaty.

The example of the Pelindaba Treaty and other existing nuclear-weapon-free zones should also be followed in the Middle East. In this context, Algeria expresses its disappointment at the fact that the conference on the establishment of a zone free of nuclear weapons and all other weapons of mass destruction in the Middle East due to have been held in 2012 has not yet been convened.

Algeria calls on, therefore, the Secretary General of the United Nations and the three co-sponsors of the 1995 resolution on the Middle East to exert maximum efforts, in accordance to the consensus decision of the 2010 NPT Review Conference, with a view to convening the conference without any further delay and stresses the importance of the participation to the conference of all States in the Middle East.

Mr. Chairman,

While we share the disappointment among Member States at the continuing impasse in the Conference on Disarmament (CD) as well as in the Disarmament Commission, my delegation considers that this deadlock is caused by a lack of political will by some States. In this regard, Algeria reaffirms the importance of the Conference on Disarmament as the sole multilateral negotiating body on disarmament. At the same time, while recalling the decision CD/1864, adopted by consensus on 29 May 2009, under the Algerian presidency, Algeria calls on the CD to agree on a balanced and comprehensive programme of work. My delegation looks forward to the deliberations of the CD’s informal working group on this matter.

In view to strengthen the different parts of the UN disarmament machinery, Algeria reiterates its position that the Fourth Special Session of the General Assembly should be convened.

Algeria considers that the Chemical Weapons Convention (CWC) and the Biological and Toxin Weapons Convention (BWC) as important components of the international legal architecture related to weapons of
mass destruction and calls for their balanced, effective and non-discriminatory implementation.

Regarding the issue of conventional weapons, Algeria supported the resolution by which the General Assembly adopted the Arms Trade Treaty. The adoption of this instrument for the international transfer of conventional arms will certainly strengthen the multilateral architecture in the field of disarmament.

Illicit trade of small arms and light weapons continues to threaten peace and stability in many countries and regions, particularly in Sahel region, as a source of supply to terrorist groups and organized crime. Concerned by this illicit trade, my delegation reiterates the importance of a full, balanced, and effective implementation of the UN Programme of Action to prevent, combat and eradicate the illicit trade in Small Arms and Light Weapons in all its aspects as well as of the International Tracing Instrument. We wish also to stress that international cooperation and assistance is essential in this area.

Mr. Chairman,

The commitment to the regional peace and security is one of the basic guidelines of Algeria’s foreign policy. On this basis, the Algerian delegation will introduce, as in previous years, a draft resolution on "Strengthening of security and cooperation in the Mediterranean region" for which we seek sponsorship and support from all Member States.

In closing, Algeria considers the First Committee as an essential component of the UN Disarmament machinery and is committed to work constructively with all delegations in order to conclude its work successfully.

I thank you