



NEPAL

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Statement by the Hon'ble Mr. Nava Raj Subedi,
Member of Parliament and Member of the Delegation of Nepal
at the General Debate of the First Committee of the 61st Session of
the United Nations General Assembly
New York, 06 October 2006

Madame Chair,

I wish to congratulate you on your unanimous election as Chairperson of this committee.

I sincerely appreciate Mr. Nobuaki Tanaka, Under Secretary-General for Disarmament Affairs, for his comprehensive statement.

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

Madame Chair,

The world currently spends approximately \$ 850 billion on annual military expenditure. The available statistics clearly support the argument that the resources freed from disarmament or from military expenditure, would significantly contribute to fulfill the resource crunch to meet the development needs in many of the developing countries.

But we are yet to make any progress to release this "disarmament dividend" to the benefit of much-needed socio-economic development.

It is a matter of concern that there has been very little progress on disarmament lately. In 2005 world summit, no understanding could be reached on disarmament and non-

proliferation issues. This was preceded by a failure at the Review Conference of the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty (NPT) to agree on any substantive recommendations. This year, no agreement could be reached on the review of the control of small arms and light weapons. The Conference on Disarmament, one of the main mechanisms for disarmament negotiations within the United Nations, has not produced any substantive outcome since 1997. The Disarmament Commission, the specialized deliberative body within the United Nations for multilateral disarmament, is also registering slow progress.

The message is loud and clear. We are not serious for disarmament. Clearly, we need a greater political will and a renewed focus to revive genuine negotiations on disarmament issues.

It has been Nepal's long standing position that there should be complete disarmament of all weapons of mass destruction, including biological, chemical, and radiological weapons in a time-bound manner.

Nuclear, chemical and biological weapons pose the greatest threat to international peace and security. There is also a potential danger of weapons of mass destruction falling into the hands of non-State actors and even terrorists.

In the absence of any global international treaty to prevent the proliferation of the weapons of mass destruction, we have to rely on the implementation of relevant Security Council resolutions to this effect.

My delegation supports the implementation of the Security Council resolution 1540 for preventing illicit trafficking in nuclear, chemical or biological weapons, their means of delivery and related materials.

There is a growing concern over increasing impasse on nuclear issues involving some aspiring nuclear states. It is more so because some of them are outside the framework of negotiations in the United Nations. Nepal strongly believes that all nuclear issues, including the peaceful use of nuclear technology, must be resolved through negotiations, preferably within the purview of the United

Nations. Nepal values multilateralism as the sole mechanism for negotiations in the area of disarmament and non-proliferation that would lead to a durable peace in the world.

We cannot resolve the nuclear issues and the issues related to the weapons of mass destruction unless we apply certain ground rules and principles evolved at the United Nations. While resolving these standoffs, efforts must be made to respect the principles of national sovereignty and the mechanism of collective security within the United Nations. Similarly, the states cannot absolve of their international obligations to comply with relevant treaty regimes for non-proliferation, test ban and peaceful use of nuclear technology.

Nepal welcomes the establishment of Nuclear Weapons Free Zones as effective ways towards promoting nuclear disarmament and non-proliferation and supports them as a means of advancing the cause of disarmament.

Madame Chair,

As a country which has seen a decade-long conflict until recently, Nepal supports the non-proliferation and prevention of illicit trade of small arms and light weapons. Since the adoption of the Programme of Action to prevent, combat and eradicate the illicit trade in small arms and light weapons in all its aspects in 2001, there has been little progress in this aspect. As the review conference on the control of small weapons and light arms ended without an agreement, we need to make genuine efforts to revive this process to discourage illicit small arms trade and to prevent illicit production, use and stockpiling of the small arms and light weapons, mainly at the hands of non-state actors.

Nepal is unequivocally opposed to arms race in outer space, which must remain free of deadly weapons and must only be used for peaceful collective human endeavors.

Madame Chair,

The role of regional centers for peace and disarmament is crucial to galvanizing the pace of disarmament and the process of arms control at the regional level. As a host for the United Nations

Regional Centre for Peace and Disarmament for Asia and the Pacific, Nepal is fully committed to an early relocation of the Centre to Katmandu. The Government of Nepal has expressed its readiness to sign the host country agreement as per the resolution of this Assembly. Let me reiterate the long standing commitment of the Government of Nepal to bear the operating cost of the Centre and to accord the privileges and immunities to its personnel. We urge the Secretariat to complete the internal procedure of the host country agreement and memorandum of understanding at the earliest for the relocation of the Center to Nepal without any further delay.

Madame Chair,

The issue of disarmament has a great bearing on the maintenance of international peace and security. However, to our utter dismay, it appears to have been pushed to the backburner of international agenda. Nepal has abiding faith in the promise of collective resolve and determination to be exercised through the United Nations. The active and influential role of the United Nations alone can push the collective action and concerted effort towards realizing the objectives of disarmament, regulations of armaments and non-proliferation of all weapons of mass destruction in the greater interest of all humankind. It is time now to work hard collectively to put the multilateral disarmament on its right track.

Thank you.