

**Introduction of draft resolution entitled:  
“Declaration of the Fourth Disarmament Decade (2008-2018)”  
(Agenda item 90)**

**Statement by Ambassador Sylvester Ekundayo Rowe (Sierra Leone)**

17 October 2006

Madam Chair,

I have the honour to introduce, on behalf of the Sierra Leone delegation, the draft resolution entitled **“Declaration of the Fourth Disarmament Decade (2008-2018)”** for the consideration of the First Committee under agenda item 90.

It is a new resolution only because it is not one of those that are considered annually, biennially or triennially. However, the idea of, and need for declaring a Disarmament Decade is not new.

As we explained in our Note Verbale to all Member States on the 6<sup>th</sup> of October, the draft is being presented against the background of the poor performance in the field of arms control, disarmament and non-proliferation that we have witnessed in recent years. In the general debate in both the Plenary and in this Committee, delegations, one after another, spoke of “protracted stalemate”, “heightened disappointment”, “impasse” and a series of “failures.” As one delegation put it “The international community failed to make anything at all of recent opportunities to make the world more secure through multilateral action on non-proliferation and disarmament.” The distinguished representative of Norway was more forthright when he said: “We shall have to change this.”

In his presentation to the First Committee on Monday, Dr. Hans Blix, Chairman of the Weapons of Mass Destruction Commission, summarized the report of the Commission in these words: “Its central message is that the global process of arms control and disarmament, which has stagnated in the last decade, must be revived and pursued in parallel with the efforts to prevent the spread of WMD to further States and to terrorist movements.”

The draft resolution, already circulated as document A/C.1/61/L.17, is also based on the Secretary-General’s assessment that now is the time to bring back disarmament into the limelight of the international agenda, and on his call for a more concerted international effort to build a common understanding of the most immediate nuclear threats in order to avoid a cascade of nuclear proliferation.

The draft would have the General Assembly recognize the urgent need to mobilize concerted and more intensive global efforts to reverse the current trend, and underline the significant role that a Fourth Disarmament Decade could play in this regard.

Madam Chair, I should like to reiterate that the draft resolution is non-controversial. It is not prescriptive as to the programme of activities and priorities of the proposed Decade. It is essentially a recommendation to commence a process. As clearly stated in operative paragraph 1, the draft would have the General Assembly request the Secretary-General to seek the views of Member States and appropriate international bodies, as well as non-governmental and civil society organizations concerning the proposed Decade. On the basis of those views and the experience of the previous Decades (the Second Decade in particular) the Secretary-General will also be requested to prepare an outline in the form of a draft working paper for the first two years of the proposed Decade. Of course there are precedents for this approach and the language of the operative paragraphs of this draft resolution. It will be recalled that the elements of the Declaration of the 1980s as the Second Disarmament Decade were prepared by the Disarmament Commission based on a preliminary outline provided by the Secretariat.

Regarding the time-frame of the proposed Decade, it appears that 2010 would be the logical commencement date of the Decade. However, the Sierra Leone delegation strongly believes that in view of the state of the international security environment, and taking into account the experience of previous Decades, the proposed Fourth Decade should commence as soon as possible. We cannot afford to spend three long years making preparations for it.

Madam Chair, distinguished delegates, the draft is open for co-sponsorship and sponsorship. My delegation trusts that it will receive the support of the entire membership of the First Committee and subsequently of the General Assembly.

I thank you Madam Chair.

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