

# GHANA



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62<sup>nd</sup> Session of the United Nations  
General Debate of the First Committee

## ***Statement***

*By*

***H.E. MR. LESLIE K. CHRISTIAN***  
*Ambassador and Permanent Representative of  
Ghana to the United Nations*

*On*

***Disarmament and International Security***

*New York,  
Wednesday, October 10, 2007*

Mr. Chairman,

At the outset, permit me to join previous speakers in expressing warm sentiments on your assumption of the chair of this Committee. Given your sterling diplomatic pedigree, I am more than convinced that under your able guidance, we should rise to the crucial task before us. We assure you of our full support and cooperation. Her Excellency Madam Mona Juul, your predecessor, who skillfully navigated the Committee through its deliberations during the 61<sup>st</sup> Session has earned our gratitude and admiration. The excellence and credit she brought to the office only confirmed our hopes and fulfilled our expectations.

Permit me to also congratulate His Excellency Ambassador Sergio Duarte on his appointment as High Representative and Head of the Office of Disarmament Affairs. It is the conviction of my delegation that his distinguished diplomatic career and profound knowledge of issues would facilitate efforts towards advancing the disarmament and non-proliferation process.

Mr. Chairman,

As a member of the Non-Aligned Movement and the African Union, Ghana, naturally subscribe to the statements eloquently delivered by the representatives of Indonesia and Nigeria respectively on behalf of the groups.

Mr. Chairman,

It is disturbing that the contours of the collective security we all seek to construct out of the debris of the cold war still remain undefined despite the reality of daunting challenges that continue to confront the international security environment. Meaningful and substantial progress continues to elude the disarmament realm. We all, as member-states, should be collectively responsible for the paralysis. While the few recalcitrant states, are more culpable, the majority cannot be completely absolved.

Mr. Chairman,

We acknowledge some positive developments were realized during the past year, as exemplified in the outcome of Biological Weapons Convention Review Conference and advances made in the Conference on Disarmament, which is inching close to negotiating a Fissile Materials Treaty. Regrettably, these have failed to impact significantly on the gloomy disarmament arena. We cannot afford any more squandered opportunities, if we are to contain the consternation over the corrosion of the international security architecture.

Mr. Chairman,

Despite the unanimous recognition among member-states that nuclear weapons constitute the greatest threat to global security and human survival, it is not only worrisome, but disappointing that 16 years after welcoming the end of the cold war as precursor for riding the world of weapons of mass destruction, especially nuclear weapons, our general concern over these weapons of terror has not diminished but accentuated.

The ever-growing disquiet over nuclear weapons that has gripped the world should reinforce the urgent need for institutionalization of concrete measures with comprehensive and total disarmament as the primary objective. Nuclear test ban agreements, non-proliferation measures, missile technology control regime, the various conventions on prohibitions, the verification measures, as well as all others should be regarded as transitory arrangements for complete disarmament. It is truism that by themselves, these measures cannot save the world from a nuclear holocaust. My delegation is of the opinion that if member states faithfully discharge their commitments as stipulated in the spectrum of agreements concluded since the inception of our Organization, the underpinning reasons that informed these documents would have been attained.

Mr. Chairman,

Naturally, it behooves the nuclear weapon states to exhibit leadership by translating their declarations into constructive action. In this connection, we wish to stress that the qualitative improvements and replacements of nuclear weapons, as well as rationalization of these weapons in security doctrines obliterate the significance of the decrease in nuclear arsenal.

While remaining concerned at the slow pace of progress, we urge the US and Russia to favourably consider the call by majority of states to strengthen their bilateral agreements through an adherence to the principles of verification, transparency and irreversibility.

Mr. Chairman,

At a period of dire and unprecedented challenges to the disarmament and non-proliferation regime, my delegation is concerned that rather than being strengthened, the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty (NPT), which, since its inception 39 years ago, has been lauded as the most widely adhered to arms control and disarmament treaty in history and the cornerstone of the international disarmament and non-proliferation regime, is in a quagmire, with an uncertain future.

We cannot allow the crisis to fester since this would exacerbate the already fragile international security environment with its attendant negative ramification on our shared vision for a secured world, free of nuclear weapons. In this connection, my delegation calls on member states to exhibit sincerity in their commitments by adopting objective and realistic measures which, if implemented faithfully, would ensure the credibility to the Treaty's mandate to achieve the universal elimination of nuclear weapons and thereby strengthen non-proliferation constraints.

Undoubtedly, the primary, but not exclusive, challenge to the NPT remains the recognition that the efficacy of the Treaty rests on the non-selectivity in the implementation of its three equally, inseparable and mutually reinforcing core elements, disarmament, non-proliferation and peaceful uses. Our consideration on these fundamental principles should not divert attention to other salient issues, notably the pursuit of universalization, negative security assurances, withdrawal from the Treaty and cooperation in nuclear technology between state-parties and non-signatories of the Treaty.

Mr. Chairman,

Non-nuclear-weapon states continue to make compromises and to take concrete steps aimed at achieving the goal of the NPT. Foremost among such measures is the establishment of Nuclear-weapon-free-zone. However, the noble objectives that informed their creation cannot be realized without

the support and cooperation of all, especially the nuclear weapon states. We therefore, urge the nuclear weapon states to exhibit clear commitment by respecting and adhering to the provisions of these agreements, which is a vital component of the non-proliferation regime. It is our hope and prayer that conditions in the Middle East will, in the near future, generate enough confidence among the states in the region, to enable them to freely conclude a regional nuclear weapon free zone treaty.

Mr. Chairman,

While weapons of mass destruction rightly deserve the focus of our attention, we should not be oblivious to the havoc being wrecked in diverse areas of conflict, worldwide, through the use of conventional weapons. Although laudable progress has so far been made in addressing the indiscriminate use of landmines and illicit trafficking in small arms and light weapons, it is too early for complacency and exultation, as we are not yet out of the woods. It is pertinent that we strengthen international cooperation in the implementation of the UNPOA as well as the Ottawa Convention with the view to attaining the ultimate. An important element in the fight against illicit trafficking in small arms and light weapons is the tightening of legal controls on manufacturing, brokering, trade and possession of small arms. It is for this reason that Ghana supports a strong and effective Arms Trade Treaty as an essential measure in prohibiting arms transfer to destinations where they would be misused to fuel violence.

Mr. Chairman,

Ghana shares the disquiet over the growing uncertainties in the disarmament agenda. The General Assembly, through this Committee, must assume and play its role in the field of peace and security. It is for this reason that we consider the Non-Aligned Movement's call for the convening of the Fourth Special Session on Disarmament a laudable initiative which merits the support of all countries, given our collective resolve to reserve the abysmal development in the international disarmament realm. The proposed conference would provide the international community with an opportunity to assess and review the gamut of issues within the global disarmament realm and proffer appropriate recommendations to contain the security challenges of the 21<sup>st</sup> Century.

Mr. Chairman,

Disarmament and arms control is closely related to other charter principles of our Organization, especially development. The intricate link between disarmament and development is even more critical now than ever before. The colossal amounts expended on the development and manufacture of lethal weapons could be diverted to the noble cause of alleviating the sufferings of millions of the deprived living on the edge of life. While almost half of the world's population survives on below \$1.00 a day, nearly \$1.2 trillion was spent on arms purchases worldwide in 2006. This is, indeed, an indictment on the moral conscience of the international community and a betrayal of political trust. Ironically, the huge investment is unjustifiable since the world is far from being secure, peaceful and safe.

Mr. Chairman,

The future of humankind is at stake and ours is the power to adopt robust and realistic measures to comprehensively address challenges confronting our collective security. We need to stand together to move forward or be confronted with the unsettling reality of failure. No country, whether powerful or weak, can handle the grim consequences of such failure. Our fate on this matter, indeed, is intertwined.

I thank you, Mr. Chairman.