

STATEMENT OF THE PERMANENT REPRESENTATIVE OF THE UNITED REPUBLIC OF TANZANIA TO THE UNITED NATIONS, AMBASSADOR DR. AUGSTINE P. MAHIGA DURING THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY FIRST COMMITTEE THEMATIC DEBATE ON ITEM G: DISARMAMENT, SUB ITEM 10 (J) “ASSISTANCE TO STATES FOR CURBING THE ILLICIT TRAFFIC IN SMALL ARMS AND LIGHT WEAPONS AND COLLECTING THEM”; NEW YORK , 21 OCTOBER 2008

Mr. Chairman

I am honoured once again to take the floor to share with Member States and the United Nations - in particular, the esteemed Secretariat that you lead, views and general proposals on how to eliminate the menace of proliferation and illicit trafficking of Small Weapons and Light Weapons (SALW) in the Great Region of Africa.

Mr Chairman

Recalling the spirit of cooperation between the United Nations (UN) and the Great Lakes Region of Africa, enshrined in the Security Council Resolution 1653 of January 2006, my delegation and I remain convinced that through you Mr. Chairman, the UN and the International Community can mobilize the requisite resources to assist the sub region curb and eventually eliminate the illicit traffic in SALW. Recent history has demonstrated that the consequences of the SALW menace are not limited to the sub-region alone but could engulf the entire African region and suck in the “Developed World” as well. Both security and development of the region on the one hand and international investments on the other are at stake as we speak, in the sub region.

There is an irrefutable link between illicit traffic of SALW, Insecurity and Human Development. In tandem with that, humanitarian crises and the breach of law has become the norm rather than the exception. Consequently, impunity, resource plundering and economic stagnation has become a way of life owing to inexcusable actions by warring factions and trigger-happy war lords trotting SALW. This must not only be stopped but also reversed.

Mr. Chairman

Security Council Resolution 1653 called for among other things, the disarmament of rebel groups and negative forces in the Great Lakes Region. We welcome the efforts undertaken by the UN through MONUC in that regard. However, two years down the road, the task has not been accomplished; on the contrary the situation has deteriorated and the UN is present in the Region, particularly eastern DRC.

The UN can alleviate the situation by increasing peacekeeping efforts and mediation activities so that peace and security can prevail permanently in the sub-region and the population can embark on sustainable development. In the same vein international investment would come in handy and remain secure. Security and Development should prevail and reinforce sovereign governance. The warring forces therefore must be called to order whereas the image and dignity of the United Nations and the International Community must be restored.

Mr. Chairman

Notwithstanding the aforesaid my delegation calls upon the UN and the International Community to increase resources and efforts to curb the

illicit circulation and proliferation of SALW in the Great Lakes Region, first by addressing issues orchestrated by the stakeholders and enforcing the existing agreements. In so doing, *the force of logic must be made to prevail over the logic of force*. There is an urgent need therefore to develop and employ some “confidence building mechanisms” that will address with impartiality, various underlying interests and eventually lead to acquiescence by all stakeholders and actors. Dialogue must replace military options, and sovereign integrity must be upheld while promoting intra-and inter state peaceful solutions to conflicts.

In that regard, we call upon the UN, in accordance with Chapter VIII of the Charter to work with countries of the sub-region which recently signed a pact on Security, Stability and Development. This instrument can be used to complement and facilitate efforts of the UN and the International Community especially considering that it was negotiated with UN assistance and participation. It has adequate provisions and legal protocols that only need implementation to address security problems of the sub-region including curbing the menace of SALW. The UN role has to be revitalized.

Mr. Chairman

I now appeal to you to own this problem and in turn you may wish to propose to the Secretary General to establish a Working Committee to undertake the job and draw a course of action at the earliest opportunity.

I thank you