



Permanent Mission of Eritrea  
to the United Nations

**STATEMENT  
BY  
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**AT**

**THE GENERAL DEBATE  
OF THE FIRST COMMITTEE**

**64<sup>th</sup> SESSION OF THE UNITED NATIONS GENERAL ASSEMBLY**

**New York, 9 October 2009**



Mr. Chairman,

At the outset, allow me to join the distinguished delegates who have taken the floor before me in congratulating you on your election as Chairperson of the First Committee during the 64<sup>th</sup> session. I also wish to seize this opportunity to congratulate the other members of the Bureau. My sincere appreciation goes to your predecessor Ambassador Marco Antonio Suazo of Honduras who led us to a successful conclusion of the 63<sup>rd</sup> session. Allow me once again to take this opportunity to thank Ambassador Sergio Duarte, the High Representative for Disarmament Affairs, for his introductory statement.

My delegation fully associates itself with the Statements delivered by Indonesia on behalf of the Non-Aligned Movement (NAM), and by the delegation of Nigeria on behalf of the African Group.

Mr. Chairman,

It is encouraging to note that the yearly session of the First Committee comes at a time when some progress has been made in the field of disarmament. As the challenges of disarmament and nuclear non-proliferation continue to constitute the greatest threat to international peace and security, my delegation welcomes the positive signs of the past months and hopes concrete progress will be made towards nuclear disarmament. It is encouraging, among others, to see a growing number of States express their support to a nuclear-weapon-free world, the successful Third Preparatory meeting of the 2010 NPT Review Conference, and the agreement between the United States and the Russian Federation aiming at a new treaty on strategic arms reduction.

My delegation also welcomes the progress recently made in the Geneva Talks on the Iranian nuclear issues and appreciates the flexibilities shown by all parties during the process. A momentum is building up and the International Community must be ready to take advantage of the opportunities that arise to ensure that they bear tangible outcomes.

Mr. Chairman,

While we cannot expect to change the somewhat strained international climate overnight, my delegation believes that there are actions that can be taken to preserve and build international confidence to advance the cause of international nuclear disarmament and non-proliferation; i.e. by reaffirming collective commitment to preserve the sanctity of international agreements and by collectively

recognizing the need to pursue progress concurrently, on both fronts of disarmament and non-proliferation.

There is an almost universal agreement that the international community can meet the challenges to peace, security, and stability only through multilateralism especially when it is under the auspices of a strengthened, revitalized and reformed United Nations. In this way, it can provide credibility and legitimacy for addressing issues related to disarmament and international security. It is, therefore, imperative that the international community needs to come together, and work harder to promote a world free of fear from nuclear armaments. Nuclear issues should be addressed through dialogues and negotiations. Imposing sanctions or resorting to force can hardly offer a sustainable solution to the proliferation concerns.

Mr. Chairman,

Peace and security are not threatened by nuclear weapons only. Other weapons of mass destruction, including, Chemical as well as Biological and Toxin Weapons, are posing a threat to international security. In the field of Conventional Weapons too, the proliferation and easy access to Small Arms and Light Weapons, which have been rightfully defined as the “new weapons of mass destruction” are also sources of serious concern. These weapons are known to escalating conflicts and violent crimes; fueling terrorism, impeding post-conflict reconstruction; and undermining long-term sustainable development, in many regions of the developing world, particularly in Africa. It is for this reason that Eritrea attaches great importance and sees no better instrument than the United Nations Program of Action to Prevent, Combat and Eliminate the Illicit Trade in Small Arms and Light Weapons in All its Aspects since its adoption in 2001 as a politically binding instrument.

Mr. Chairman,

The balance between the “three pillars” of the Non-proliferation Treaty must be maintained. The relation among nuclear disarmament, non-proliferation and peaceful use of nuclear energy should be appropriately addressed; and nuclear disarmament and nuclear non-proliferation should be pushed forward in a balanced way. In this regard Eritrea strongly believes that it is an inalienable right of all States to develop all aspects of nuclear science and technology for peaceful purposes without discrimination as long as it is consistent with the obligations under the NPT. My delegation reiterates its strong support for the IAEA’s increased input and assistance to developing countries in the fields of nuclear power, nuclear safety and security and nuclear technology application.

Mr. Chairman,

Disarmament benefits mankind not only because it eliminates threats to peace, security but also because it helps divert financial and economic resources to development efforts.

Let me conclude my statement by calling on all concerned parties to demonstrate sufficient political will in the reduction and destruction of nuclear weapons.

Thank you.

