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PERMANENT MISSION OF THE FEDERAL
DEMOCRATIC REPUBLIC OF ETHIOPIA
TO THE UNITED NATIONS

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STATEMENT BY

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AMBASSADOR

CHARGE DE AFFAIRES A.I. OF

THE FEDERAL DEMOCRATIC REPUBLIC OF ETHIOPIA

TO THE UNITED NATIONS

AT THE FIRST COMMITTEE

THE GENERAL DEBATE

OF THE 64th SESSION OF THE UNITED NATIONS GENERAL ASSEMBLY

New York, October 9, 2009

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Mr. Chairman,

At the outset, I wish to congratulate you on your election to preside over the deliberations of the 64th session of the First Committee. I would also like to congratulate other Members of the Bureau and give you the assurances that my delegation would fully cooperate with you.

My delegation took note of the opening statement by Mr. Sergio Duarte, the High Representative for Disarmament Affairs which was comprehensive in addressing the wide range of issues.

Mr. Chairman,

Ethiopia welcomes the progress on the African Nuclear-Weapon-Free Zone (Pelindaba Treaty) as it entered in to force recently. We are determined to strengthen the main elements of collective security in Africa. My delegation is convinced that the remarkable progress made during the debate at the Security Council on nuclear nonproliferation and disarmament on 24 September 2009 would enable the international community to move forward. We are also confident that the new momentum in the negotiation on global disarmament issues would attract many nations to follow a similar path.

Tensions of conflict and war in Africa, as in many regions of the world, continue to threaten global security. The menace of terrorism is highly tied to the issue of disarmament and non-proliferation. Ethiopia, placed at the epicenter of this scourge, believes that international collaboration is critical in the fight to wreck the activities of international terrorist groups in our region. Terrorism and the specter of the use of various Weapons including Biological Chemical and Weapons of Mass Destruction (WMD) by irresponsible organs has made our nations most vulnerable. The war on terrorism in the horn of Africa and the partnership sought from the international community did not seem to match the demand. The situation that we are in requires us to act in unison. Ethiopia calls for strict adherence to arms embargoes imposed on countries at war.

Mr. Chairman,

As our foreign and national security policy provides, the main focus of my government is to build vibrant economy and establish strong defense system to be able to realize our objective of bringing economic development and building a democratic system. Ethiopia believes that peace and security could only be guaranteed in the world when all nations are able to enjoy stable economic and social order. There is a consensus that security, stability and peace will be achieved through investment in the human person, rather than in the creation of sophisticated armaments. In many instances we observe the rising figure in military expenditure, whereas the majority of the people in our part of the world are living in abject poverty. The world should not be silent on increase in military expenditure which could not be justified on any ground.

My delegation believes that the Comprehensive Nuclear Test Ban Treaty (CTBT) is a key component of nuclear disarmament. While on one hand we are witnessing agreements on reduction of nuclear armaments, it is worrying that some nuclear states continue to uphold doctrines of national defense and security strategy based on nuclear weapons. Even more alarming is the possibility of continued nuclear

tests to improve these weapons to fit into the configuration in different scenarios of war. My delegation notes with appreciation the recent accord between the Russian Federation and the United States of America. No doubt, nuclear weapons remain to pose the major danger to the survival of the human race, either by accident or by deliberate action. We believe that the abolition of nuclear weapons would be the only assurance against the use of those weapons.

My delegation calls upon the Conference on Disarmament to focus its efforts on the resumption of substantive work. When partners in peace are able to pursue momentous disarmament and security, they will bring significant change.

Mr. Chairman,

Ethiopia has been closely working with the Organization for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons (OPCW) given the dangers posed by such weapons. My government put in place the legal framework and institutional machinery for the implementation of the Chemical Weapons Convention (CWC). My delegation believes that the alarming threat posed by chemical weapons in the hands of terrorist groups require immediate action by the international community.

The problem of the proliferation of Illicit Trade in Small Arms and Light Weapons in our sub-region has been aggravated as the result of the absence of stable government in Somalia. This problem posed a major challenge to the maintenance of regional peace and security. Small Arms and Light Weapons are as destructive as weapons of mass destruction for us. The provision of these arms by states to terrorist groups and non-state actors has a direct bearing on the security of individual states and indeed on international peace and security.

Mr. Chairman,

We are encouraged that the search for solutions to the grave challenges posed by Illicit Trade in Small Arms and Light Weapons in all its Aspects has resulted in placing it as one of the current international agenda items. My government has been working, in close cooperation with the partners in the region and outside, to implement the Program of Action to Prevent, Combat and Eradicate the illicit trade and transfer of such weapons. In line with this member states of the IGAD undertook measures to improve the coordinating mechanisms that will facilitate smoother implementation of the Program of Action. These regional and sub regional organs in Africa need financial, technical and political support from the international community for the effective implementation of the Program of Action.

In conclusion, Mr. Chairman, I would like to call upon States to focus on alleviation of poverty and invest in the human person and reduce the expenditure in armaments as this is the right path to security, stability and peace. Ethiopia also calls for the adoption and implementation of measures to rid the world of the threat posed by small arms and light Weapons.