

GHANA



PERMANENT MISSION OF GHANA
TO THE UNITED NATIONS
19 EAST 47TH STREET
NEW YORK, N.Y. 10017
TEL. 212-832-1300 • FAX 212-751-6743

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STATEMENT BY

H.E. MRS. MARTHA A.A. POBEE
AMBASSADOR AND PERMANENT REPRESENTATIVE
PERMANENT MISSION OF GHANA TO THE UN

AT THE
GENERAL DEBATE ON ALL DISARMAMENT AND
RELATED INTERNATIONAL SECURITY AGENDA ITEMS

New York, October 6, 2017

Mr. Chairman,

My delegation joins the previous speakers to warmly congratulate you and other members of the Bureau on your well-deserved election. We have confidence in your able leadership to steer the agenda of this Committee to a successful conclusion and wish to assure you of our support and cooperation in the discharge of your onerous duties.

Ghana associates herself with the statements delivered by the distinguished representatives of Indonesia and Nigeria, on behalf of the Non-Aligned Movement (NAM) and the African Group, respectively.

Mr. Chairman,

Ghana maintains the view that employing multilateralism to address global disarmament issues is vital to achieving a safer and secure world. This is particularly critical in the light of the current challenges to peace and security, including the increased threat of terrorism and the existential threat posed by nuclear weapons and other weapons of mass destruction.

The elimination of nuclear weapons has been on the agenda of the United Nations since its establishment and yet achieving total, irreversible and internationally verifiable nuclear disarmament as envisaged in the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty (NPT) has eluded us.

It is of concern that despite the noble regime established by the NPT and the many creative measures introduced thereon to strengthen the nuclear disarmament and non-proliferation agenda, the Treaty is continuously subjected to re-interpretations, anecdotes, and further conditions. We are equally disappointed that this year's First Preparatory Committee Meeting (PrepCom) of the 2020 Review Conference of the State Parties to the NPT in Vienna, failed to produce a consensus outcome document. This development is, arguably, a testament of the lack of good faith by some Member States in their commitments towards nuclear non-proliferation and disarmament.

The near inaction of nuclear weapon states to resolve their differences must propel us collectively to seek new and innovative approaches to bridge differences and build confidence and transparency going forward. Ghana is optimistic that further positive engagements and implementation of all agreed measures and commitments

by the Nuclear Weapon States in the context of the NPT, would help advance the objective of general and complete disarmament.

Mr. Chairman,

We are encouraged by the successful adoption of the Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons (TPNW) on 7th July, 2017, and subsequent opening of the Treaty for signature on 20th September, 2017. Ghana actively participated in the negotiation process and joined other member states to endorse this important legal instrument aimed at accelerating our collective efforts towards achieving a world free of nuclear weapons. Indeed, Ghana was among the first countries that signed the Treaty when it was opened for signature.

It is without a doubt that the adoption of this Treaty represents a momentous progress towards achieving a world free from nuclear weapons, and accelerates the slow progress of the nuclear disarmament machinery, which has remained in stalemate for decades. The Treaty has become an indispensable part of the general disarmament discourse and reinforces the objectives of the NPT for the achievement of a world without nuclear weapons. We, therefore, urge member states that are yet to subscribe to the Treaty, including the Nuclear Weapon States (NWS), to do so without any further delay.

Mr. Chairman,

It is worrying that the Conference on Disarmament, which is the sole multilateral forum for disarmament negotiations, has remained in deadlock for some years now and failed to reach consensus on a programme of work and thus commence substantive deliberations. We once again, urge the CD to show leadership and carry out its mandated functions, taking into account the overall security interests of all states.

We acknowledge the important contribution of the United Nations Disarmament Commission towards general and complete disarmament. In particular, we welcome the recent successful adoption by consensus this year, the reports, conclusions and recommendations of its Working Group II regarding practical confidence-building measures in the field of conventional weapons. However, it is regrettable that there was lack of consensus on the recommendations for achieving the objective of nuclear disarmament and non-proliferation during the 2017 session of the Disarmament Commission, further reflecting the stalemate in disarmament negotiations and in particular, non-existent commitment and political will of some member states to their obligations.

Mr. Chairman,

Ghana maintains that a world free of nuclear weapons will be in our collective interest. We are, therefore, committed to maintaining a nuclear-weapon zone in Africa, particularly under the Pelindaba treaty, which reaffirms the status of African continent as Nuclear-Weapon-Free Zone (NWFZ). For this reason, highly-enriched Uranium from Ghana's miniature neutron source reactor was recently transported out of the country to China, signaling the end of the process of removal of such material from our shores.

We underscore the significant contribution of Nuclear Weapon Free Zones to the overall objective of a world free of nuclear weapons and renew our call on all stakeholders, particularly States in the Middle East to continue to constructively engage in efforts to ensure that that region is free of nuclear weapons.

Mr. Chairman,

Ghana shares the view that the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty (CTBT) and a Fissile Material Cut-Off Treaty (FMCT) are sine qua non to a world free of nuclear weapons. We welcome the consensus report of the Governmental Group of Experts on a treaty banning the Production of Fissile Material for Nuclear and other Explosive devices, which in our view, serves as basis for future negotiations on a possible FMCT, ideally, under the auspices of the Conference on Disarmament (CD). We also welcome the convening of the 9th Ministerial Conference of the CTBT held in New York on 20th September, 2017, and renew our call on Annex II states that are yet to ratify the CTBT to fast track the process of ratification.

Mr. Chairman,

The illicit transfer, excessive accumulation, and misuse of Small Arms and Light Weapons (SALW) in many regions of the world pose considerable threat to international security. We are concerned about the impact of the illicit trade, transfer, accumulation and uncontrolled spread of SALW in many parts of the globe, particularly in Africa. Ghana, therefore, remains committed to the UN Firearms Protocol and UN Programme of Action to Prevent, Combat and Eradicate the Illicit Trade in Small Arms and Light Weapons in all its Aspects, and joins the call by other member states for its full and effective implementation. We have demonstrated our commitment towards reducing small arms proliferation and misuse, particularly through the destruction of more than 1300 illegal weapons in 2016 and ongoing crackdown on local gun manufacturing and trafficking through our borders.

We also align ourselves with other Member states to acknowledge the strident contribution of the Arms Trade Treaty (ATT) since its entry into force and the successful convening of the Third Conference of State Parties (CSP3) held in Geneva in September 2017. The ATT is indeed a significant achievement and an important step in advancing security and improving accountability, responsibility and transparency in international arms transfers.

We, reiterate the call by the African Group for all member states to support the implementation of the ATT and to extend technical, financial and material assistance to developing countries to enable us to fulfill and implement the Treaty's obligations.

Mr. Chairman,

In conclusion, I wish to indicate that continuous desire for and reliance on armaments by some member states in security doctrines not only threaten the future of mankind but deprive us of the needed resources for sustainable development. Situating this view within the context of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), Ghana joins in the peaceful calls for a fundamental review and discourse to establish the linkages between disarmament and development as well as the current excessive global military spending.

I thank you for your kind attention.