

REPUBLIC OF
BOTSWANA

PERMANENT MISSION OF THE REPUBLIC OF
BOTSWANA TO THE UNITED NATIONS

154 EAST 46TH STREET • NEW YORK, N.Y. 10017
TEL. (212) 889-2277



STATEMENT BY

**AMBASSADOR AND PERMANENT REPRESENTATIVE
OF THE REPUBLIC OF BOTSWANA
TO THE UNITED NATIONS
H.E. CHARLES T. NTWAAGAE**

**DURING THE
GENERAL DEBATE
OF THE**

FIRST COMMITTEE

**ON THE OCCASION OF THE 72ND SESSION
OF THE UNITED NATIONS GENERAL ASSEMBLY**

**06th OCTOBER 2017
NEW YORK**

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Mr. Chairman,

1. Allow me, at the outset, to congratulate you on your election as Chair of the First Committee for the 72st Session of the General Assembly. My delegation assures you and Members of the Bureau of our total support as you engage in this demanding task of guiding the deliberations of the Committee during this session.
2. The importance of this Committee and the role that it plays in the preservation of international peace and security cannot be overemphasized.
3. In the same vein, my delegation takes this opportunity to thank your predecessor, His Excellency Ambassador Sabri Boukadoum, Ambassador and Permanent Representative of Algeria to the United Nations for his sterling leadership of the Committee during the 71st session.
4. My delegation further, aligns itself with statements delivered by delegations of Indonesia and Nigeria on behalf of the Non-Aligned Movement and the African Group, respectively.

Mr. Chairman,

5. Let me begin by re-affirming the importance that Botswana attaches to the principles and guidelines of the Charter of the United Nations particularly with respect to the maintenance of international peace and security. It is our firm belief that the issue of disarmament and international peace and security should continue to feature prominently in the agenda of the United Nations, for as long as peace and stability remains elusive.
6. As we pursue the Post 2015 Development Agenda, our overarching goal for the sustained development and prosperity of human-kind must always remain that of peace, safety and security, as prerequisites for the achievement of sustainable development.

Mr. Chairman,

7. As it is now customary, it is that time of the year where we meet to take stock of what has been happening around the world with regards to peace and security. We certainly remain challenged in our collective endeavour to "save succeeding generations from the scourge of war" and making this world a safer place to live in.
8. More than ever before, we are witnessing an alarming rise in instability, insecurity and violent extremism that result in untold devastation and dislocation of communities, gross violations of human rights and fundamental freedoms of innocent peoples, especially civilians.
9. Botswana therefore, remains gravely concerned about these serious threats to international peace and security in many parts of the world, which arguably present the greatest challenge to human development.

Mr. Chairman,

10. Botswana remains deeply concerned about the unrelenting contravention of international law and relevant UN resolutions by North Korea through its continuous testing of ballistic missiles. These acts by North Korea pose a threat, not only in the Korean Peninsula, but throughout the Pacific region and the world at large.
11. We therefore appeal to the international community to work in unison and take prompt and decisive action that will ensure North Korea adheres to the values and principles of the United Nations Charter.

Mr. Chairman,

12. My delegation reiterates its concern about the lack of progress in achieving a world free of chemical, biological and nuclear weapons. This status-quo can be attributed in part to reluctance and non-cooperation by some Member States which possess such weapons

and regards them as an integral part of their strategic defence architecture.

13. We therefore, join other delegations in underscoring the point that the total elimination of weapons of mass destruction is the only absolute guarantee against their use or threat of use. In this connection, we wish to recognize and indeed welcome the recently adopted *Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons* with the ultimate goal of leading towards their total elimination.
14. We further implore those member States which did not take part in this process to listen to the concerns of the majority and *march in step with the rest*, as we embark on this long and difficult journey.

Mr. Chairman,

15. Botswana is gravely concerned about the potential catastrophic humanitarian impact of the use of nuclear weapons. The three Conferences held on this topic, in Oslo, Nayarit and Vienna, all came to a very sad and frightening conclusion that no State or International organization has the capacity to address or provide short or long term assistance and protection needed in case of a nuclear weapon explosion. It is for this reason, amongst others, that my delegation is fully convinced that the total elimination of nuclear weapons is the only absolute guarantee against their use or threat of use.
16. Botswana is in total support of the establishment of Nuclear weapon free – zones and believe that this regional approach will bind Member States to reject nuclearization of their respective regions.
17. We are indeed proud to be a signatory to the Treaty of Pelindaba which renders Africa a nuclear free zone. In the same manner, it is commendable that other regions enjoy nuclear free status; such as Latin America (Treaty of Tlateloco), South East Asia (Treaty of Bangkok), South Pacific (Treaty of Rarotonga) and Central Asia. In this regard, we urge those regions that are lagging behind such as the

Middle East to expedite this process in accordance with the relevant resolutions of the General Assembly.

Mr. Chairman,

- 18.** Another area of concern in the maintenance of international peace and security is that of conventional weapons, which unfortunately account for a considerably high number of the world inventory of arms, some of which are generally easy to acquire.
- 19.** The illicit trade and trafficking of small arms and light weapons requires our collective efforts. Their accumulation and uncontrolled spread in many regions of the world is quite evident.
- 20.** It is against this background that we fully support efforts towards the implementation of the Programme of Action to Combat and Eradicate the Illicit Trade in Small Arms and Light Weapons in All Its Aspects (PoA) as well as the International Tracing Instrument (ITI).
- 21.** We fully appreciate that due to resource limitations and differing capacities of Member States, there are challenges that affect the full realization of the goals of the Programme of Action. However, this is not an insurmountable problem if there could be unity of effort and meaningful technical cooperation and exchanges.
- 22.** The Sixth Biennial Meeting of States (BMS6) to consider implementation of the UN Programme of Action against the illicit trade in small arms and light weapons (BMS6) that took place in New York from 6 to 10 June 2016, underscored the fact that new developments in weapons manufacturing, technology and designs have significant adverse implications on an efficient application or implementation of the UNPoA and ITI.
- 23.** In this regard, we implore cooperating partners to provide both technical and financial means and capacity building to those in need in order that we may derive maximum benefit from the PoA and associated instruments.

24. In this connection, we look forward to the next Review Conference in 2018 where issues such as the effective implementation of the PoA will be examined

Mr. Chairman,

25. Finally, Botswana reiterates her support for peaceful use of nuclear energy and exploration of outer space for the benefit of man-kind. We are however, concerned by weaponization and over-crowding of this domain. In this regard, there is need for creation of effective norms and measures to regulate activities in outer space.
26. Let me end by wishing all Members of this Committee fruitful deliberation.

I thank you for your attention.
