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STATEMENT
TO BE DELIVERED BY
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AMBASSADOR AND PERMANENT REPRESENTATIVE
OF GHANA TO THE UNITED NATIONS

DURING THE
GENERAL DEBATE ON DISARMAMENT
AND INTERNATIONAL SECURITY
AT THE FIRST COMMITTEE 73RD SESSION
OF THE UNITED NATIONS GENERAL ASSEMBLY

NEW YORK, 11TH OCTOBER, 2018

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 Morocco, on behalf of the Non-Aligned Movement (NAM) and the African Group, respectively.

Mr. Chairman,

Ghana remains convinced that employing multilateral diplomacy to address global disarmament and non-proliferation issues is vital for achieving a safer and secure world. This is particularly critical in light of the current political polarization and challenges to international peace and security, including the increased threat of terrorism and the existential threat posed by nuclear weapons and other weapons of mass destruction.

It is a matter of concern to my delegation that the overall objective of achieving a world without nuclear weapons in the context of the NPT, which is the foundation of the nuclear disarmament and non-proliferation regime, has eluded us for decades. We are equally disappointed that following the last NPT Review Conference in 2015 that concluded without a substantive outcome document, three preparatory Committee meetings of State Parties have, so far, not signaled any meaningful prospects for consensus outcome in the forthcoming 2020 NPT Review Conference.

Instead, the world is witnessing high investment of billions of dollars by some States in the development, modernization and acquisition of nuclear arsenals and other weapons of mass destruction at the expense of global human suffering and sustainable development. Some States are also redefining and reneging on their international obligations as well as

replacing existing commitments with vague negative security assurances in order to maintain their stockpiles of weapons of mass destruction.

Notwithstanding these developments, we believe that the UN is capable of dealing with existing global challenges to the disarmament and non-proliferation regime. In this context, we welcome the Secretary-General's agenda on disarmament, which has been fashioned to reposition disarmament and non-proliferation issues at the center of UN activities. It is our expectation that the agenda will expedite progress and contribute to securing the world and future generations from the existential threat of nuclear arsenals and other weapons of mass destruction.

Mr. Chairman,

Ghana believes that a world free of nuclear weapons will be in our collective interest and that the only guarantee to ensuring total elimination of such weapons is to completely prohibit them. For this reason, we are encouraged by the successful adoption of the TPNW in July 2017 to complement and reinforce the NPT against the backdrop of humanitarian and environmental consequences of the use, testing and accidental detonation of nuclear weapons. Ghana signed the Treaty when it opened for signature and is making efforts towards its early ratification. We encourage States that are yet to sign the Treaty to do so without further delay.

We also acknowledge the significant contribution of Nuclear Weapon Free Zones, including the Treaty of Pelindaba, adopted by Africa, 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 also free of nuclear weapons.

We would also like to underline the importance of the Comprehensive Nuclear Test Ban Treaty (CTBT) to the disarmament and international security regime and urge all States that are yet to sign and ratify the CTBT, particularly the remaining eight (8) Annex II States to do so without further delay.

Ghana further believes that the high-level meeting of the General Assembly held on 6th September, 2018 to mark and promote the International Day against Nuclear Tests will help create public awareness about the effects of nuclear test explosions, and the need for their cessation. Similarly, the annual commemoration of the International Day for the Total Elimination of Nuclear Weapons on 26th September will also enhance international commitment to the goal of achieving the noble aspiration of a more peaceful and secure world without nuclear weapons.

Mr. Chairman

A verifiable Fissile Material Cut-off Treaty (FCMT) to address existing stockpiles and to ban future production of all fissile materials remains an important step towards nuclear disarmament. In this regard, we call for the commencement of negotiations on a possible FMCT, ideally, under the auspices of the Conference on Disarmament (CD).

We encourage all States to continue to support programmes and activities that advance the aims and objectives of the Chemical and Biological Weapons Conventions and prevent the non-proliferation of such weapons. In this regard, it is our hope that the apparent polarization in the disarmament arena over the use of chemical weapons, particularly toxic weapons and nerve gas agents in Syria, Salisbury and elsewhere can be addressed.

Mr. Chairman,

The uncontrolled flow and illicit circulation of small arms and light weapons continues to disrupt communities around the world and pose considerable threat to international security. The scale of harm, havoc and instability caused by illicit transfer, excessive accumulation, and misuse of SALW, particularly in Africa, cannot be underestimated.

For this reason, we welcome the successful outcome of the Third Review Conference (RevCon3) of the United Nations Programme of Action to Prevent, Combat and Eradicate the illicit trade in Small Arms and Light Weapons in all its Aspects (UNPoA), held in New York in June 2018. We are

encouraged that despite the protracted nature of the negotiation process, RevCon3 yielded several positive developments and adopted an outcome document, which for the first time, included references to ammunition, gender-based violence, gender equality in participation in disarmament process, and sustainable development.

We also acknowledge the strident contribution of the Arms Trade Treaty (ATT) since its entry into force and the successful convening of the Fourth Conference of State Parties (CSP4) held in Tokyo in August 2018. We reiterate the need for necessary technical, financial and material assistance to be extended to developing countries to fulfill and implement the Treaty's obligations further urge Non-State Parties to consider signing the Treaty achieve universalization.

Mr. Chairman,

The increasing dependence of societies on space-based platforms and satellites for human endeavor in the 21st Century appears threatened by a new form of colonial competition and the possible damage that self-seeking exploitation might cause. This is a matter of international security and calls for renewed focus on ensuring safety in outer space for our common good. The peaceful uses of outer space and celestial bodies, including the prevention of placement of weapons in outer space and the removal of dangerous orbital debris, cannot be overemphasized.

In conclusion, **Mr. Chairman**, Ghana looks forward to supporting new and innovative approaches that can bridge our differences and build confidence and transparency in the pursuit of general and complete disarmament. We also encourage further positive engagements, negotiations in good faith and implementation of all agreed measures and commitments by all stakeholders.

I thank you for your kind attention.