



Permanent Mission of Afghanistan to the United Nations

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**STATEMENT**

**BY**

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Afghanistan to the United Nations

*At the General Debate of the First Committee*

*70<sup>th</sup> Session*

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**Mr. Chairman,**

Allow me to congratulate you on your election as Chairman of this session. My delegation is fully committed to the successful fulfillment of the work of the Committee, and assures you of our full support and cooperation.

The Islamic Republic of Afghanistan aligns itself fully with the statement delivered on behalf of the Non-Aligned Movement. However, I would like to draw attention to a few specific points in my national capacity.

As history has repeatedly shown, political decisions incur the worst ramifications when made unilaterally, without consultations or consideration of the needs of all actors involved. It is for this reason Afghanistan wishes to reiterate its commitment to multilateral diplomacy as a crucial principle for advancing the global disarmament agenda. Only with all sides demonstrating political will we can achieve the goal of arms control, reduction, disarmament and total elimination of all types of Weapons of Mass Destruction, including nuclear weapons. In this context, we welcome the successful conclusions between the Islamic Republic of Iran and P5+1, which will benefit security and stability in our wider region. Going forward, it will be imperative that the concerned parties fulfill commitments to implement the agreement. Only through strong collective political will we can reach our collective desired goal of a nuclear-free world.

**Mr. Chairman,**

Afghanistan strongly and consistently supports all initiatives in the sphere of nuclear disarmament. As such Afghanistan is party to Non-Proliferation Treaty, the Comprehensive Test Ban Treaty, among many other treaties calling for the total elimination of nuclear weapons as well as weapons of mass destruction.

We are of the firm belief that full utilization of these existing international mechanisms is the only guarantee to the security of our world, and doing so requires their universal adherence. Afghanistan is not alone in urging all states to fulfill their international responsibilities in signing, ratifying, and actively supporting all efforts to promote the goals of all multilateral treaties relating to disarmament and non-proliferation.

The failure to agree on an outcome document at the 2015 NPT Review Conference represents an increasingly grave need for more effective action and leadership on the part of NPT member states. The division exists on a number of urgent issues which have, in our opinion, otherwise clear-cut solutions, is a worrisome reality and should serve as a wake-up call for the international community to renew its commitments and turn words into action.

In the same manner, we would like to express our strong disappointment at the failure to convene a conference on the establishment of the Middle East as a zone free of Nuclear Weapons and all Weapons of Mass Destruction. As the political turmoil in the Middle East threatens to spill over into its neighbouring regions, Afghanistan wishes to highlight the need for immediate action to

be taken by the international community to prevent looming humanitarian and political catastrophe and overcome diplomatic stalemates.

Afghanistan is extremely disturbed at the humanitarian threat posed by the continued existence of nuclear weapons, and the possibility of their use, intentionally or accidentally. It is for this reason that we welcome the outcome of the third and final Conference on the Humanitarian Impact of Nuclear Weapons, which recognizes that total elimination of all nuclear weapons is the only definite safeguard against a nuclear explosion. Despite this collective understanding, there has been inadequate progress by Nuclear Weapons States in fulfilling their commitments to eliminate their nuclear stockpiles, and we echo the calls for these states to abolish their dangerous nuclear doctrines, which include the practice of refurbishing or modernizing existing nuclear stockpiles and related facilities, and using the global existence of nuclear-weapons as an excuse for maintaining or proliferating one's own stockpiles.

**Mr. Chairman,**

Enduring conflict has facilitated one of the most destructive developments in Afghanistan. The mass illicit trafficking of arms, mainly small and light weapons, along the Durand Line which has enabled the terrorists and extremists to cause the Afghan people tremendous suffering for decades, must be put to an end for Afghanistan's enduring conflict is to be solved. We embrace the Program of Action to Prevent, Combat, and Eradicate the Illicit Trade in Small Arms and Light Weapons but believe that it must be accompanied with a deeper understanding of the complex realities on the ground, closer follow up of its implementation, and integration with the mandate of the Arms Trade Treaty.

We are also grateful for the recommendations made by the 2015 Open-ended Meeting of Governmental Experts, and their thoughtful insights on developments and emerging needs for the Programme of Action, including new considerations that need to be made in light of evolving modern technologies and the importance of marking weapons for tracing purposes.

Subsequent brutal wars over the past few decades have left Afghanistan heavily mined, which has claimed the lives of hundreds of thousands of our civilians. We remain one of the most heavily mined countries in the world; despite the fact over 80 percent of minefields have been cleared thanks to international efforts. For the year of 2014, an average of 38 civilians were killed or injured each month, and nearly 1 million Afghans still live within 500 meters of landmines. The continued existence of minefields also poses a threat to the development process in Afghanistan, as they delay the construction of national infrastructure projects until clearance.

The use of anti-personnel landmines in Afghanistan is used freely to the benefit of brutal terrorists who have no regard for the children they maim, the lives they destroy, or the country they devastate. It is for this reason that the work of the United Nations Mine Action Service in Afghanistan, which transferred full responsibility for mine action entirely to the Afghan government in 2012, is critical. While Afghanistan's Mine Action Programme has produced excellent results, funding cuts threaten the goal we set in line with the Ottawa Treaty for fully ridding Afghanistan of mines by 2023, if further conflict and furnishing mines are prevented.

However, we thank the generous donations made from Member states to UNMAS, aid that is invaluable to achieving our goals, but still far from what is needed. We look forward to the successful completion of the Fourteenth Meeting of States Parties to the Convention on the Prohibition of the Use, Stockpiling, Production and Transfer of Anti-Personnel Mines and on Their Destruction. We are committed to the full realization of the goals adopted at the Third Review Conference of the Convention in Maputo.

And finally Mr. Chairman, Afghanistan is gravely concerned about the continued existence of Improvised Explosive Devices - IEDs around the globe. IEDs are responsible for thousands of civilian casualties every year; they have become the primary weapon for non-state armed groups across many conflicts. Their impact on the security and stability of states are profound, as they do not only damage the political, social, and economic development of a country, but also prevent the ability of necessary humanitarian aid to reach afflicted areas. Due to the lack of a comprehensive, systematic approach to countering the use of IEDs, which is relatively simple in its manufacturing, acquirement, and transfer, we call for an international mechanism to be established which seeks to eradicate the creation and proliferation of IEDs. Therefore, my delegation is tabling a resolution at this committee during the current session. The resolution, inter alia, includes the consistent collection of data, awareness raising, regulation of components, and international technical assistance and cooperation, and victim assistance. In this regard we held our first informal consultations with the member states and my delegation seeks further your full cooperation and support, so the resolution could be adopted by consensus.

**Mr. Chairman,**

In conclusion, I would like to state that this year; we share a special responsibility to commemorate the 70<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the atomic attack on Nagasaki and Hiroshima that killed many lives and hopes across generations. Remembering this catastrophe brings an ample occasion to remind ourselves of the dire humanitarian consequences of nuclear weapons. In this context, my delegation has supported the initiative of Austria on the Humanitarian Consequences of Nuclear Weapons during this year's NPT Review Conference.

My delegation sadly notes that, despite the many positive developments in the work of international diplomacy for the disarmament of nuclear weapons, we still face threats to human security and sustainability of a scale similar to what the generation before us have faced. The global and regional climate of terrorism has made the call for nuclear disarmament as well as that of the weapons, including small and light arms the more urgent.

**I thank you for your kind attention.**