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STATEMENT BY

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PERMANENT REPRESENTATIVE OF GHANA TO THE UN**

AT THE

**GENERAL DEBATE ON ALL DISARMAMENT AND
RELATED INTERNATIONAL SECURITY AGENDA ITEMS**

New York, October 4, 2016

Mr. Chairman,

I join previous speakers in congratulating you and other members of the Bureau on your election. We have confidence that under your able leadership, the work of this Committee would be brought to a successful conclusion.

Ghana associates herself with the statement delivered on behalf of the Non-Aligned Movement and the African Group.

Mr. Chairman,

Of all the known threats to global peace and security, arguably, the most dangerous is the proliferation and potential use of nuclear weapons. Four and half decades after the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty (NPT) came into force, we are yet to make significant steps forward towards a world free of nuclear weapons. With the slow pace of progress in disarmament negotiations and the continued investment in upgrade of existing nuclear arsenals, the vision of nuclear disarmament seems far from realization.

Ghana, therefore, strongly advocates a renewal of international commitment to the NPT, which remains the cornerstone of the global nuclear non-proliferation and disarmament regime. Its universality, legal commitment and safeguards for the development, acquisition, possession and use of nuclear weapons underlie its strength. As we proceed to the next review cycle of the NPT in May 2017, we urge the international community to address the challenges that thwarted our efforts to agree on an outcome document during the 2015 NPT Review Conference.

Mr. Chairman,

The establishment of nuclear-weapon-free zones is an important and concrete contribution to nuclear disarmament. For this reason, we welcome renewed efforts to seek a common way forward towards the establishment of a Middle East zone free of nuclear weapons and all other weapons of mass destruction. We call on all states in the region to show political will and flexibility to bridge divergent views and to ensure the convening of the conference, which should have been held in 2012.

Our collective security also demands that states ratify the Comprehensive Test Ban Treaty (CTBT). As we mark the 20th anniversary of the CTBT's adoption, we call on all States, particularly those whose ratification is needed for its entry into force, to do so as soon as possible.

The negotiation of a Fissile Material Cut-Off Treaty remains critical in view of its potential benefits to strengthening the non-proliferation regime and reducing the risk of nuclear terrorism. Ghana advocates a universal and effectively verifiable treaty, banning the production of fissile material for use in nuclear or other nuclear explosive devices.

We must review nuclear doctrines and take steps to reduce the risk of intentional or accidental use of nuclear weapons, including through their de-alerting and de-targeting. Ghana joins the call for nuclear weapon-states to pursue and conclude a universal, unconditional and legally binding instrument that provides negative security assurances to non-nuclear weapon states, pending the total elimination of nuclear weapons.

Mr. Chairman,

Ghana supports the recommendations of the Open-Ended Working Group, including the call for the convening of a conference by the General Assembly to begin negotiations for a universal and legally-binding instrument prohibiting the use of nuclear weapons, and leading to their total elimination. We believe that this will be a step forward and will assist in establishing general prohibitions and obligations, as well as political commitment to achieve and maintain a world without nuclear weapons. The initiative taken by a cross-regional group of member states to table a resolution on the matter at this current Session is a welcome development in this regard, and Ghana looks forward to actively participating in discussions on the subject.

Mr. Chairman,

The threat that Weapons of Mass Destruction (WMD) pose to humanity and the environment is of serious concern to the international community. We urge all States to continue to strengthen national measures to prevent non-state actors, especially terrorists from acquiring WMDs, the materials and technologies related to their manufacture, and their means of delivery.

In the meantime, Ghana welcomes the successful conclusion of the Open Consultations on the Comprehensive Review of the Status of Implementation of Resolution 1540 (2004) held in New York in June 2016. We also applaud the leadership shown by Malaysia in organizing the open debate on **“Challenges in addressing proliferation of WMDs, their means of delivery and related materials”** on the 23rd August, 2016. We are hopeful that recommendations from these meetings will inform concrete action to prevent non-state actors from acquiring WMDs.

We share the view that ultimately the best way to prevent non-state actors from acquiring and using WMD is by eliminating nuclear weapons, destroying chemical weapons and strengthening the prohibition against biological weapons.

Mr. Chairman,

On the issue of conventional weapons, Ghana welcomes the successful convening of the Sixth Biennial Meeting of States (BMS 6) on the implementation of the UN Programme of Action (PoA) on Illicit Trade in Small Arms and Light Weapons in June this year. We are of the view that the inclusion of ammunition in the Programme of Action is of critical importance. The issue of curbing the illicit flow of ammunitions must be taken seriously since the real value of Small Arms and Light Weapons depends on the availability of ammunition. It is hoped that this matter will be given serious consideration and effectively addressed at the Third Review Conference in 2018.

We are, meanwhile, gratified to note that the Sixth Biennial Meeting encouraged states to develop national level indicators, based on the PoA and ITI that could be used to measure progress in implementing SDG target 16.4, to significantly reduce illicit arms flows by 2030.

Ghana has also taken note of the important decisions taken at the Second Conference of States Parties to the Arms Trade Treaty in Geneva in August this year, including the adoption of parameters for a Voluntary Trust Fund, as well as setting up Working Groups on Transparency and Reporting, Implementation and Universalization, which will no doubt facilitate the work of the ATT.

Mr. Chairman,

I cannot conclude my statement without mention of the valuable contribution of women to practical disarmament measures at the local, regional and international levels and the need to support their full and meaningful participation in and access to all policymaking, planning and implementation processes related to arms control and disarmament. We call for increased technical assistance and capacity-building in support of mainstreaming gender perspectives in disarmament, non-proliferation and arms control processes, particularly in developing countries.

In closing may I wish to express Ghana's fervent hope that this 71st Session of the General Assembly will witness a re-affirmation of our collective commitment and resolve to achieve progress on all fronts in the area of disarmament, in the interest of humanity and international security.

I thank you for your kind attention.