

REPUBLIC OF
BOTSWANA



PERMANENT MISSION OF THE REPUBLIC OF
BOTSWANA TO THE UNITED NATIONS

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STATEMENT BY

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OF THE REPUBLIC OF BOTSWANA
TO THE UNITED NATIONS**

**DURING THE
GENERAL DEBATE
OF THE**

FIRST COMMITTEE

**ON THE OCCASION OF THE 71st SESSION
OF THE UNITED NATIONS GENERAL ASSEMBLY**

06th OCTOBER 2016, 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 71st Session of the General Assembly. My delegation assures you and the Bureau of our total support as you engage in the demanding task of guiding the deliberations of the Committee during this session. The importance of this Committee and the role that it plays in the preservation of international peace and security must be commended.

2. In the same vein, my delegation takes this opportunity to thank your predecessor, His Excellency Ambassador H.E. Mr. Karel Jan Gustaaf van Oosterom, Ambassador and Permanent Representative of Netherlands for his effective leadership of the 70th session of the First Committee.

3. My delegation aligns itself with statements delivered on behalf of the Non-Aligned Movement and the African Group respectively.

Mr. Chairman,

4. Let me begin by re-affirming the importance that Botswana attaches to the principles of the Charter of the United Nations particularly with respect to the maintenance of international peace and security. We firmly believe 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 are not realized. As long as the world remains seized with various conflicts and threats to international peace and security, the noble goals and objectives as enumerated in the Post 2015 Development Agenda will remain but a dream. The common sentiment is that peace, safety and stability are prerequisites for the achievement of sustainable development.

5. Botswana remains gravely concerned about the serious threats to international peace and security in many parts of the world, which arguably present the greatest challenge to human development. We are witnessing an alarming rise in instability, insecurity and violent conflict that often result in untold devastation and dislocation of communities, gross violations of human rights and fundamental freedoms of innocent peoples.

Mr. Chairman,

6. The continued existence of nuclear weapons, scourge of international terrorism, the illicit trade and flow of small arms and light weapons and

weaponization of space are some of the challenges which continue to pose a threat to peace and security, stability and indeed development.

7. My delegation, like most, if not all, is extremely wary of the lack of progress in achieving a world free of chemical, biological and nuclear weapons. This can be attributed to reluctance and non-cooperation by some Member States who incidentally possess such weapons.

8. We therefore join other delegations to reiterate that the total elimination of these weapons of terror is the only absolute guarantee against their use or threat of use.

9. The continued existence of these weapons brings into question the commitment by Nuclear Weapon States to achieve complete disarmament. While we recognize security concerns as propagated by these possessor States, we maintain that the potential catastrophic humanitarian impact of the use of these weapons of terror should serve as a motivation for us to eliminate them once and for all.

10. Deeply troubling in this regard, is the increasing involvement of non-state actors and radical extremists and the possibility of possessing these deadly weapons that they may employ with impunity. Should this occur, we only have ourselves to blame because we would have failed as a collective to realize a world free of nuclear and other weapons of mass destruction.

11. My delegation is in total support of the establishment of Nuclear weapon free – zones and believes that this regional approach will bind States to respect de-nuclearization of the respective territories. Botswana is proud to be associated with the Pelindaba Treaty which renders our continent Africa a nuclear free zone. We also commend regions which have achieved this monumental task and urge those lagging behind to expedite the process if for anything but posterity.

Mr. Chairman,

12. Regarding conventional weapons, the illicit trafficking of small arms and light weapons is yet another serious and grave challenge of our time. Their accumulation and uncontrolled spread in many regions of the world is a cause for serious concern. That these weapons pose the gravest danger to peace, stability and security, throughout the globe is without doubt. Their adverse impact, even on the socio-economic development process, is evident, especially in developing countries. The twin evils of conflict and crime are perpetuated

through the use of small arms and light weapons and the international community is paying a heavy price while implementing reactive measures.

13. 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 as well as the International Tracing Instrument (ITI). We however, fully appreciate that due to resource limitations and differing capacities of States, realization of the goals of the Programme of Action remain a challenge.

14. In addition to the above reasons, 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. It therefore remains imperative that implementation of the PoA and ITI is strengthened and other new methods considered, if need be.

15. We applaud the positive spirit that led to the successful conclusion of the BMS6 and it is our hope that we will carry this momentum through to the Review Conference coming up in 2018.

16. In this connection, 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.

17. In conclusion, **Mr. Chairman**, my delegation wishes to re-affirm its continued support to efforts of the international community aimed at fighting challenges related to peace and security. Recent reviews such as the Peacebuilding Architecture Review and others indicated a change in paradigm wherein Member States emphasised prevention as opposed to reactive behaviour. This is indeed heartening and should herald a new approach to these weighty matters.

18. Finally, we wish all members of the committee fruitful deliberations. It is our sincere hope and expectation that under your leadership, **Mr. Chairman**, the Committee, with the usual positive spirit and determination, will be able to reach consensus on as many resolutions before it, as possible.

I thank you for your attention.
