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**Fiji Statement in First Committee Debate on
Regional Disarmament and Security
71st Session of the United Nations General Assembly
25 October, 2016**

Mr Chairman,

Fiji aligns itself with the Statement delivered by the distinguished delegate of Indonesia on behalf of the Non-Alignment Movement (NAM). We wish to add a few remarks in our national capacity.

Mr Chairman,

Our efforts to move toward general and complete disarmament need to begin with regional disarmament if we are to live in a world of genuine peace and security. Fiji is committed to genuine peace and security. In this connection we had signed and ratified the Rarotonga Treaty of 1985 where we resolved to keep the Pacific free of nuclear weapons. The Rarotonga treaty illustrates the commitment of 14 Pacific island States to keeping our region nuclear free.

Regional security is central to international security and serves as a catalyst for enduring peace and security in the world. As violence and armed conflicts flare in different parts of the world today, we as the international community must revisit our traditional approaches to strengthening peace and security. While there are numerous benefits of a comprehensive and complete disarmament, Fiji also recognizes the benefits of adopting a piece-meal approach of reaching that goal by keeping regions free of nuclear weapons as well as employing measures to curb the trade illicit small arms and light weapons. We are convinced that there should be more conventional arms control at the regional and sub-regional level. Regional cooperation and assistance is one of the most effective measures to combat the illicit proliferation and trade of conventional weapons. Information-sharing in this regard would aid states in monitoring, detecting and confiscating illicit weapons.

This approach has worked well for the Pacific region. The Treaty of Rarotonga constitutes a lynchpin of security and stability in the Pacific where we successfully established a nuclear free zone – a region that was until very recently subjected to nuclear testing. The treaty not only bans the use, testing or possession of nuclear weapons, but is also a clear commitment by state parties to regional peace and security. The merits of regional disarmament arrangements should not be overlooked in light of regional security challenges.

We would therefore encourage other states to adopt similar regional arrangements in their respective regions.

Mr Chairman,

In the same vein, we also urge the international community to revisit the merits of the adoption of other measures, in particular confidence building within regions. Transparency and trust are fundamental to enduring regional peace and security. These measures have the effect of reducing fear in tense situations. By no means does this apply only to nuclear weapons; it is also applicable to conventional weapons.

With an ambitious 2030 Development Agenda, States simply cannot afford to be occupied in regional conflicts or divert scarce resources to fund wars, away from the implementation of the *SDG's*. Therefore states have a vested interest to ensure that such confidence building measures are employed and adopted.

In conclusion Mr Chairman, Fiji is committed to the principles of the UN, and peace and security. In this globalised world, we are no longer immune to threats and problems faced by our neighbours as their own since problems of a transnational scale do not respect boundaries and are never confined to the borders of one state. It is for this reason that Fiji urges the international community to engage in meaningful dialogue and negotiations in creating and promoting peaceful and inclusive societies for sustainable development.

I thank you.