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PERMANENT MISSION OF THE FEDERAL
DEMOCRATIC REPUBLIC OF ETHIOPIA
TO THE UNITED NATIONS

866 Second Avenue, 3rd Floor • New York, N.Y. 10017

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STATEMENT

BY

**H.E. AMBASSADOR MAHLET H. GUADEY,
DEPUTY PERMANENT REPRESENTATIVE OF THE
FEDERAL DEMOCRATIC REPUBLIC OF ETHIOPIA**

AT

**THE GENERAL DEBATE OF THE FIRST COMMITTEE OF
THE 71ST SESSION OF THE UNITED NATIONS
GENERAL ASSEMBLY**

October 7, 2016

New York

Mr. Chairman,

It gives me great pleasure to congratulate you and other members of the Bureau on your elections to guide the work of this Committee. My delegation assures you and the Bureau members of its full cooperation and support.

Ethiopia associates itself with the statements delivered on behalf of the African Group and the Non-Aligned Movement.

Mr. Chairman,

The continued existence of nuclear weapons and of their possible use or threat of use poses existential threat to humanity. It is a conundrum that nuclear weapon, by far the most dangerous weapons of mass destruction, is the only weapons of mass destruction not yet explicitly prohibited under international law. To add insult to injury, these weapons are being further modernized and upgraded. Curbing the escalation of nuclear arms race is a task which should be accomplished without any further delay.

The step-by step approach has failed to make concrete and systematic progress towards the total elimination of nuclear weapons. The need to take concrete actions to attain and maintain a world without nuclear weapons is critically urgent. In this vein, Ethiopia supports the recommendation of the Open Ended Working Group which, inter alia, called for the convening of a conference by the General Assembly to negotiate a legally binding instrument to prohibit nuclear weapons, leading towards their total elimination

These negotiations, however, shall not be in lieu, rather should complement and strengthen the nuclear disarmament and non-proliferation regime. The Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons remains the cornerstone of the global non-proliferation regime. The three pillars of the NPT still represent

an unparalleled framework for maintaining and strengthening international peace and security. It is a must to draw lessons from our failure in the 2015 Review Conference of the Parties to the NPT and exert maximum efforts to agree on an outcome document at the next review cycle of the NPT in May 2017.

My delegation would like to reiterate that the total elimination of nuclear weapons remains the only absolute guarantee against the use or threat of use of nuclear weapons. We join the call for nuclear weapon states to pursue and conclude a universal, unconditional and legally binding instrument that provides negative security assurances to all non-nuclear-weapon states against the use or threat of use of nuclear weapons, pending their total elimination.

Mr. Chairman,

Nuclear weapon free zones immensely contribute to the attainment of a world free of nuclear weapons. By the same token, the establishment of a nuclear free Middle East is essential for global peace and security and for the stability of the region. We call on all stakeholders to show flexibility and engage in the spirit of mutual understanding in convening a Conference on the establishment of a Middle East Zone Free of Nuclear Weapons and all other Weapons of Mass Destruction.

African is a nuclear weapon free zone, pursuant to the Treaty of Pelindaba, which clearly demonstrates the commitment of African states to the non-proliferation regime. Ethiopia is proud to be part of that and remains committed to the Treaty.

Mr. Chairman,

Much to our dismay, 20 years have passed since the opening of the Comprehensive Nuclear Test-Ban Treaty (CTBT) for signature and yet the treaty did not enter into force. The universalization and implementation of the CTBT is in our collective security interest. For this reason, we call upon those states that have not yet signed or ratified the CTBT to do so as a matter of urgency. We especially call upon the states in annex II of the CTBT and whose ratifications are crucial for the treaty's entry into force.

We firmly believe that multilateralism and international cooperation are crucial to effective and long-term results in the field of disarmament. Ethiopia joins other member-States in reaffirming the importance work entrusted to of the Conference on Disarmament as the world's single multilateral disarmament negotiating forum and expresses its concern at the impasse that has prevented the CD from fulfilling its mandate.

Mr. Chairman,

The conventional weapons, particularly, illicit small arms and light weapons, pose grave security challenge to the African continent and its member states. The use of these weapons by non-state actors and their wide-spread and unfettered access to them indeed remain to be a source of threat and great concern. The illicit traffic and trade in these weapons has to be checked as a matter of urgency. The role of the United Nation Programme of Action to Prevent, Combat and Eradicate the Illicit Trade in Small Arms and Light Weapons in All Its Aspects, is quiet immense in mobilizing international cooperation in this regard.

We welcome the successful convening of the Sixth Biennial Meeting of states on the implementation of the UN Program of Action and the consensus outcome document. We look forward to actively participate in the Third Review Conference of the UN Program of Action in 2018.

Mr. Chairman, allow me to conclude by reiterating Ethiopia's unreserved commitment to disarmament and international security. We hope the 71st session of the General Assembly would serve us as a platform to register a meaningful leap in the disarmament regime.

I Thank You.