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STATEMENT BY

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71ST UNITED NATIONS GENERAL ASSEMBLY

**FIRST COMMITTEE
GENERAL DEBATE**

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Let me first congratulate you, Excellency, Ambassador Sabri Boukadoum, on assuming the Chairmanship of the First Committee for the 71st session of the UN General Assembly. I wish to assure you of support and cooperation of the Delegation of Poland in fulfilling your mandate.

Poland fully associates itself with the statement delivered on behalf of the European Union. Building upon it, I would like to point out a couple of issues particularly relevant for my government.

Mr. Chairman,

The dynamics of international relations and complexity of security issues should motivate us to strengthen the existing institutions and mechanisms in the field of disarmament and non-proliferation. In our view, each institution is as sound, as sound and determined its members are. We believe that the UNGA First Committee is not an exception from this rule while dealing with international security matters and striving for long-term sustainable solutions. Poland believes that there are no quick fixes on the way to build more stable security environment other than by creating systemic solutions which survive the test of time.

Poland is willing to take special additional responsibility for international peace and security by campaigning for a non-permanent seat in the UN Security Council for the years 2018-19. The motto of our campaign is Solidarity-Responsibility-Commitment, values we want to bring into the work of the Security Council, while emphasizing that international politics should be based on the force of law, rather than the law of force.

Mr. Chairman,

In my statement I would like to refer to several key international agreements and initiatives.

Let me start with the NPT: Despite the failure of the 2015 NPT Review Conference to reach an agreement on a substantive final document, the NPT remains a cornerstone of international system of nuclear non-proliferation, disarmament and peaceful uses of nuclear energy. It proved its effectiveness in curbing proliferation of nuclear weapons, while at the same time providing sufficient legal basis for undertaking effective measures towards nuclear disarmament under Article VI of the Treaty.

Poland is supporting progressive step-by-step approach towards nuclear disarmament. We believe that progress in this field can only be achieved if Non-Nuclear-Weapon States and Nuclear-Weapon States work together on the basis of shared objectives. Any discussion must be inclusive and taking into account legitimate security concerns and commitments of all States. We noted with concern growing polarization in the debate on nuclear disarmament, including in the work of the Open Ended Working Group in Geneva. Any new initiatives aiming at nuclear disarmament should not undermine the existing NPT regime. We must ensure that renewed consensus on the way forward is reached during the next NPT review cycle. Poland will keep an active engagement in the process, in particular by chairing the Second Preparatory Committee meeting to the 2020 NPT Review Conference.

The 20th anniversary of the opening for signature of the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test- Ban Treaty (CTBT) reminds us on the need to accelerate the efforts to ensure an early entry into force of the Treaty. In this context, we welcome international efforts towards this end, such as the Vienna Ministerial Meeting and the meeting of the Friends of the CTBT, held recently in New York, with the participation of the Minister of Foreign Affairs of Poland as an evidence of our strong commitment for the universally accepted norm against nuclear testing. We also welcome the adoption of the UN Security Council resolution 2310 in support of the CTBT, cosponsored by Poland. Therefore, we are seriously concerned about recent nuclear tests conducted by the DPRK, which had been strongly condemned by the international community as clear violation of its international obligations and numerous UN Security Council resolutions.

We urge the DPRK to return to dialogue with the International Atomic Energy Agency in order to subject its nuclear programme to international control.

Ballistic missiles tests conducted this year in a number of States pose serious challenge to international security. Poland is strongly supporting international efforts aimed at curbing proliferation of ballistic missiles, including by adoption of the UNGA First Committee resolution on the Hague Code of Conduct (HCoC) as a unique transparency and confidence building instrument against ballistic missiles proliferation. In this context, we welcome recent accession of India to the HCoC and the Missile Technology Control Regime. Poland will undertake efforts to encourage further accessions to the Code during our Chairmanship in the HCoC in 2017-18.

Mr. Chairman,

As in the previous years Poland introduces in the United Nations General Assembly Draft Resolution on the Implementation of the Chemical Weapons Convention (CWC). The resolution underlines the exceptional role of the CWC in the area of disarmament, preventing re-emergence of chemical weapons, international cooperation and protection against chemical weapons.

It is of utmost importance today when challenges for the implementation of the Convention remain a source of continuous attention of whole international community. The elimination of chemical weapons stockpiles is still continuing. Non-state actors have and may further obtain access to toxic chemicals and employ them for terrorist purposes. And last but obviously not least, chemical weapon is being used what constitutes a violation and challenge to international law.

The General Assembly has to address these developments, in particular to condemn in the strongest possible terms use of chemical weapons by anyone under any circumstance. This is today unfortunately no longer an abstract idea (as demonstrated by recent report of the OPCW-UN Joint Investigative Mechanism).

But above all the resolution this year is to ensure the overall support of the international community for the world free of chemical weapons, the CWC implementation in its whole entirety as well as its universalization. It should provide for a strong united message recognizing and supporting the OPCW efforts in this area.

For these very reasons we hope that the resolution will regain an unequivocal, preferably consensual, support of this forum at this demanding time.

Mr. Chairman,

Poland continues to attach great importance to the work conducted within the framework of Convention on Certain Conventional Weapons (CCW). The Convention continues to be the most relevant forum where states can voice their concerns on the state of implementation of the international humanitarian law in an unconstrained way. We appreciate the possibility offered by the CCW to address threats resulting from both existing conventional weapons and emerging technologies, such as lethal autonomous weapons systems. In regard to the latter we look appreciatively at progress made so far and hope to see a further formalization of discussion, including through establishment of the Group of Governmental Experts at the CCW Fifth Review Conference.

There are humanitarian challenges that still linger in the outside world and they are not diminishing. Poland is committed to common efforts in countering the inhumane impact of improvised explosive devices (IEDs). IEDs pose a growing threat to the lives of soldiers and civilians alike. IEDs are transnational in nature and an obstacle to the economic and social development of nations. Global threats need global solutions. The UN has the proper reach and means to deal with such issues.

We should not forget about the continuous challenge posed by illicit flows of SALWs, which are the cause of innumerable deaths, and have the same degrading socio-economic impact as IEDs. Poland welcomes the initiative of France to adopt the declaration on the illicit trade in small arms and light weapons in order to renew our commitment stemming from the United Nation's Programme of Action to Prevent, Combat, and Eradicate the Illicit Trade in Small Arms and Light Weapons, in All Its Aspects.

Mr. Chairman, Last but not least,

Poland recognizes the severe impact of anti-personnel mines and explosive remnants of war (ERWs) on the humanitarian situation, stability and development. We will remain committed to fulfilling the political goals and to ensure further progress in the implementation of the Anti-Personnel Mine Ban Convention. Our commitment to the Convention is twofold: along with political support we have been contributing financially to the operations of the APLC's Implementation Support Unit.

I would like to use this occasion to wish Chile, the holder of the 15 Meeting of States Parties' Chairmanship in 2016, every success in conducting this event and reaching constructive and forward looking results. Chile's chairmanship, a mine affected country, gives special meaning to this event.

Thank you, Mr. Chairman.