

26 September 2014

**Statement of H.E. Mr. Sam Kahamba Kutesa,
President of the 69th Session of the General Assembly,
at the Commemoration of the International Day for the Total
Elimination of Nuclear Weapons**

**Honourable Ministers,
Excellencies,
Distinguished Representatives,**

It is a special privilege for me to preside over and address this Commemorative Meeting of the General Assembly at the Ministerial Level and mark the “International Day for the Total Elimination of Nuclear Weapons”.

I extend my appreciation to Indonesia, as chair of the Non-Aligned Movement Working Group for Disarmament for actively coordinating the preparations for this meeting.

Excellencies,

The sobering prospect of the catastrophic consequences of the use of nuclear weapons anywhere on our planet, is a reminder of the need to work urgently and with determination to prohibit and eliminate these weapons once and for all.

Today is significant because it reassures us that the United Nations and world leaders, in particular, should remain engaged on this important issue.

This day is an opportunity to increase public awareness and education about the threat posed to our common humanity by nuclear weapons. It is also an opportunity to mobilize further international efforts towards achieving the common goal of a nuclear-weapon-free world.

As President of the General Assembly, I am happy to be associated with this commemoration and the objective of a nuclear weapon free world, which is a critical ingredient to the achievement of international peace and security. It deserves to be given priority during this General Assembly session, and each subsequent session.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

The General Assembly has been at the forefront of calling for the total elimination of nuclear weapons, regionally and globally. As we commemorate this international day, the time has come for us to redouble our efforts to implement this collective commitment and translate those words into action. I will work with member states during this session to translate some of these commitments into action.

It is in the interest of the very survival of humanity that nuclear weapons are never used again. The effects of a nuclear weapon detonation, whether by accident, miscalculation or design would have grave and catastrophic consequences. All efforts must be exerted to eliminate this threat. Indeed, it is a shared responsibility of all States to prevent the use or proliferation of nuclear weapons and to achieve disarmament.

The total elimination of nuclear weapons is a shared responsibility, with the General Assembly well-positioned to play a critical role in this endeavor. Today, offers us a unique opportunity to speak in a unified voice: “if you want to make history, make nuclear weapons history”.

I thank you for your kind attention.