STATEMENT

BY

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OF THE PERMANENT MISSION OF THE REPUBLIC
OF ZAMBIA TO THE UNITED NATIONS

AT

THE FIRST COMMITTEE OF THE 68TH SESSION
OF THE UNITED NATIONS GENERAL ASSEMBLY

GENERAL DEBATE

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Mr. Chairman,

At the outset, I would like to extend my congratulations to you Ambassador DABBASHI, on your assumption of the Chairmanship of this important Committee. I assure you of my delegation’s full support and cooperation.

My delegation would also like to align itself with the statements made on this subject by Indonesia, on behalf of the Non-Aligned Movement and Nigeria, on behalf of the African Group.

Mr. Chairman,

Zambia remains strongly committed to the notion of general and complete disarmament and reaffirms her support for a world free of nuclear weapons. As a State Party to the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty (NPT) and the Comprehensive Nuclear Test Ban Treaty (CTBT), Zambia is committed to the universalisation of the two treaties and we pledge to continue supporting the regional and global efforts in the field of nuclear disarmament and non-proliferation.

My delegation acknowledges the contribution that the five regional Nuclear Weapons Free Zones (NWFZ), continue to make towards the strengthening of global nuclear non-proliferation and disarmament norms and consolidation of international efforts towards peace and security. Zambia is encouraged that African States are all States Parties to the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty and have agreed to declare the continent a nuclear weapons free zone through the Pelindaba Treaty, and calls upon region that do not have a Nuclear-Weapon-Free Zone to work toward that end.

We however remain concerned with the large number of nuclear weapons that remain on high alert in the world today, and the devastating effects that a nuclear catastrophe can have on human life and the environment. It is clear from the Oslo Conference held in March 2013 on the humanitarian consequences of a detonation of a Nuclear Weapon, as well from the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty PrepCom held in Geneva in April 2013, that the continued possession of nuclear weapons is a threat to human security. Thus the only preventive action is to ban and eliminate Nuclear Weapons once and for all. In this light, Zambia welcomes the initiative by Mexico to hold a follow-up meeting on this question in February 2014.

Zambia is further concerned with lack of progress in negotiations on any of the issues on the agenda of the Conference on Disarmament (CD). We, nevertheless, welcome the adoption of the decision by the CD for the establishment of an informal Working
Group with the mandate of producing a programme of work. Zambia is convinced that a functional CD is key for the international community to address effectively, international security and disarmament related challenges. We also note the failure by the United Nations Disarmament Commission, the sole specialized deliberative body within the United Nations disarmament machinery, to adopt recommendations and submit to the General Assembly. The need to find an amicable solution to this stalemate in the disarmament machinery cannot be over-emphasized.

The absence of an internationally binding instrument that guarantees unconditional and legally binding security assurances to non-nuclear armed States against a nuclear attack or use of threats by a nuclear State remains a concern to Zambia. Our concern is more so in view of the current environment, which is characterized by non-compliance with either the NPT or CTBT obligations by Member States. My delegation therefore, supports international efforts towards negotiations for a legally binding instrument on negative security assurances pending the total elimination of nuclear weapons.

Mr. Chairman,

Allow me to highlight also that Zambia recently successfully hosted the 4th Meeting of States Parties (4MSP) to the Convention on Cluster Munitions (CCM). This was the first time for the CCM to be held on African soil. Although Zambia neither produces, stockpiles nor uses cluster munitions, it took on this task as a demonstration of its commitment to the alleviation of human suffering and environmental degradation that Cluster Munitions cause. Under the theme “Universalisation”, Zambia joins in urging all States yet to ratify or accede to the CCM, to do so.

The 4MSP highlighted the broad rejection of cluster weapons by the majority of world states. It also showed the powerful norm the convention is creating against the use of cluster munitions as expressed by the 48 States that during that meeting expressed concern at the ongoing use of cluster munitions in some parts of the world.

The Convention is already having a clear impact, with stockpile destruction making the greatest success so far. We congratulate States for their enthusiastic response to this central Convention obligation. The 4MSP emphasized that clearance of land contaminated by Cluster Munitions is possible and can be done very efficiently when the adequate methodologies are applied.

Mr. Chairman,
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Zambia takes this opportunity to congratulate the Security Council for its bold step in examining the issues of small arms and light weapons and adopting its first ever resolution on the matter at its meeting of 26th September 2013. More importantly is the emphasis the resolution places on the need for full and effective implementation of the United Nations Programme of Action to Prevent, Combat and Eradicate the Illicit Trade in Small Arms and Light Weapons in All its Aspects, and in the International Instrument to enable the timely identification and tracing of illicit, small arms and light weapons.

My delegation calls for the setting up of a multilateral funding mechanism to help speed up work on this front as the existing mechanism under international cooperation and assistance-Matching Needs and Resources-has proven ineffective in moving the UNPoA agenda forward.

Mr. Chairman,

In partnership with like-minded UN Member States, Zambia worked tirelessly to successfully conclude the negotiations that led to the adoption of the Arms Trade Treaty which today has over 100 signatory States. The Treaty give the strong impetus to stem the illicit trade in small arms. Zambia would like to encourage States that have not yet signed this Treaty to do so. I am happy to indicate that Zambia has set into motion the process to ratify the Treaty as soon as possible and would like in this vain to encourage States that not yet signed this Treaty to do so.

Allow me Mr. Chairman to end my statement by restating that Zambia believes in a common vision of a world free from the menace of repugnant weapons.

I thank you.