

15 October 2014

**Statement of H.E. Mr. Sam Kahamba Kutesa,
President of the 69th Session of the General Assembly,
to the First Committee**

**Ambassador Courtenay Rattray, Chair of the Committee,
Excellencies,
Distinguished Delegates,
Ladies and Gentlemen,**

It is my pleasure to address the First Committee as President of the 69th session of the General Assembly. Let me begin by congratulating you, Mr Chairman, the Vice Chairs and the Rapporteur, on your election and stewardship of the Committee.

The matters addressed by this Committee are of utmost importance to the international community and the work of United Nations, as a whole. A peaceful and secure world is the basic building block required for all peoples to enjoy lives of safety, prosperity and dignity. Our collective efforts towards arms control and disarmament are a fundamental component of the United Nations' work under the peace and security pillar, and have broad implications on many other aspects of the Organization's work.

Excellencies,

As we prepare to open a new chapter in history, we simply cannot fulfil our promise of a more sustainable and prosperous future without ensuring peace and security for all. We cannot send children to school, feed the hungry, provide care for the sick and develop our infrastructures and economies if weapons, wars and conflicts continue to divert our time, energy and resources. True security is based on people's welfare – a growing economy, strong public health and education programmes, and on fundamental respect for our common humanity.

The reality we face today is that nuclear weapons and other weapons of mass destruction, whether they be biological, chemical or radiological pose a threat to our very existence. The sobering prospect of the disastrous consequences of their use anywhere on our planet reminds us all to work with urgency and determination to prohibit and eliminate them once and for all. With the rise of terrorism, the possibility that these weapons, even in the most basic form, could fall into the hands of terrorists has added to the need to confront this danger by preventing proliferation and promoting disarmament.

On the 26th of September this year, in line with resolution 68/32 introduced by this Committee, I convened the first commemorative meeting of the General Assembly, marking the 'International Day for the Total Elimination of Nuclear Weapons'. The day was significant because it reminded us all of

the grave dangers associated with these weapons and the need to respond to the threats they pose to international peace and security.

The same resolution called for an International Conference on Nuclear Disarmament to be held no later than in 2018. In this regard, I will offer my good offices to work with Member States so we can lay a solid foundation for convening this conference.

**Excellencies,
Ladies and Gentlemen,**

I look forward to the Third Conference on the Humanitarian Impact of Nuclear Disarmament that will be held this December in Vienna. Following the second conference held in Mexico, the Vienna meeting will be an opportunity to place the humanitarian consequences of nuclear weapons use at the forefront of the discussions on nuclear disarmament. I am convinced that by focusing on the humanitarian dimensions of nuclear weapons, we can provide greater impetus to achieve nuclear disarmament.

It is essential that we work collectively to advance the nuclear disarmament and non-proliferation agenda. The Non Proliferation Treaty (NPT) represents an important binding commitment to prevent the spread of nuclear weapons, promote cooperation in the peaceful uses of nuclear energy and advance the goal of achieving nuclear disarmament.

The Review Conference of the NPT next May will present an opportunity to take stock of our efforts across the three pillars of the Treaty and consider the next steps with a view to further strengthening the global nuclear disarmament and non-proliferation regime.

The revitalization of the disarmament machinery remains an area where we need to see more progress. While the Open Working Group engaged in discussions in a collaborative and interactive manner, further work will be needed to bring the entire UN membership into this process and advance multilateral negotiations.

Distinguished delegates,

Around the world, conventional weapons continue to pose a significant threat to peace and security. We must give due attention the scourge of small arms and light weapons and vigorously pursue our common endeavours to reduce armed violence, increase human security and promote sustainable development.

Small arms destabilize communities, destroy countless lives and hamper development efforts. The human, social and economic costs demand us all to strengthen our commitment to curb the illicit trade in small arms and light weapons.

In this regard, I welcome the entry into force of the Arms Trade Treaty this coming December, which provides a framework to improve the regulation of the international trade in conventional arms and prevent and eradicate their illicit trade. The implementation of the Programme of Action represents

another important element in our collective efforts to combat the illicit trade of small arms and light weapons. Each requires the active participation of all peoples, men and women alike.

The United Nations Charter elaborates on the important role of regional arrangements or agencies in the maintenance of international peace and security. In the area of regional disarmament and security, confidence-building measures have proven their utility and efficacy. The role of such organizations is indispensable in this regard. The international framework should take into account regional efforts to enhance disarmament initiatives in support of the broader global security agenda.

**Excellencies,
Distinguished delegates,**

Moving forward, I encourage you all to pursue your deliberations in a spirit of dialogue and compromise. In this endeavour, you can count on my support and cooperation.

I thank you for your attention.