STATEMENT

BY

H.E NEVILLE GERTZE

AMBASSADOR AND PERMANENT REPRESENTATIVE

IN THE GENERAL DISCUSSION OF

THE FIRST COMMITTEE OF THE
76TH SESSION OF THE UNITED NATIONS GENERAL ASSEMBLY

OCTOBER 2021

NEW YORK

(Check Against Delivery)
1. I wish to congratulate you, Mr. Chair, and the members of the Bureau on your election to manage the affairs of the First Committee for the 76th Session of the General Assembly. I assure you of my delegation’s full support.

2. Namibia aligns itself with the statements by the distinguished representatives of Ghana on behalf of the African Group and Indonesia on behalf of the Non-Aligned Movement. I wish to add the following in my national capacity.

   Mr. Chair,

3. My delegation places a premium on matters of Disarmament and International Security. For this reason, we continue to prioritise issues pertaining to non-proliferation and the total elimination of weapons of mass destruction. In the same vein, we remain cognisant of the fact that the accumulation and uncontrolled use of small arms and light weapons continues to be both a major threat and a heavy burden to international peace and security.

4. Our commitment the peaceful use of nuclear energy was escalated when on 20 March 2020, Namibia became the 36th nation to accede to the landmark 2017 Treaty on the Prohibition of nuclear weapons. We are pleased that this treaty entered into force in January this year as we consider it an ethical and moral imperative in the quest to advance international law and a big leap towards the eventual elimination of nuclear weapons.

5. Namibia joined the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty (CTBT), twenty years ago, my delegation is disappointed that as we mark the 25th Anniversary
of the CTBT, the treaty has still not entered into force. We therefore reiterate our call to all Member States who have not done so to ratify the Treaty. The CTBT remains a critical pillar of nuclear disarmament providing a firm legal basis against nuclear testing, thus preventing the development of new types and designs of nuclear weapons. We believe that the CTBT is a confidence builder among States, and will be much stronger once it becomes a universal Treaty.

Chair,

6. We look forward to the 10th NPT Review Conference which offers an opportunity to strengthen transparency and accountability in fulfilling the disarmament commitments made at the 2015 Review Conference. We look forward to the holding of the Conference and hope it will yield result-oriented outcomes to advance the non-proliferation agenda and support the elimination of nuclear weapons.

7. As a state party to the convention on Cluster Munitions, Namibia continues to be appalled by, and condemn in the strongest terms, the use of cluster munitions in conflict zones around the world.

Chair,

8. The continued proliferation of Small Arms and Light Weapons (SALW) poses obstacles to development. In the quest to end the illicit flow of SALW’s, we call for the full implementation of the International Tracing Instrument (ITI). Small arms continue to be used in criminal and armed violence, and if we are
to use a gender lense, we cannot ignore how they are used to facilitate sexual and gender-based violence and to reinforce violent, gendered social norms. We therefore reiterate our support to the outcomes of the seventh biennial meeting of States on the Programme of Action to Prevent, Combat and Eradicate the illicit trade in Small Arms and Light Weapons in all its aspects and its International Tracing Instrument.

9. My delegation is pleased with the inclusion of the WPS Agenda in the outcome document of BMS7 and we are of the view that the integration of all four pillars of the WPS Agenda are critical to the full enforcement of the POA.

10. As I conclude, I wish to reemphasize, my delegations commitment to multilateralism and the international disarmament agenda. To quote, the words used by the High Representative for Disarmament Affairs last week: “The world is at a point where cooperation and multilateralism must replace tensions and division”.

11. I thank you.