PERMANENT MISSION OF THE REPUBLIC OF SIERRA LEONE TO THE UNITED NATIONS

STATEMENT

by

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Mr. Chair
Excellencies,
Distinguished Delegates,

1. Let me take this opportunity to congratulate you, Mr. Chair, and members of the bureau on your election to lead the work of the First Committee.

2. Sierra Leone respectively aligns itself with the statements deliver by Ghana on behalf of the African Group and Indonesia on behalf of Non-Aligned Movement (NAM).

3. Achieving total and complete disarmament globally is the end state Sierra Leone looks forward to. We believe that effective multilateralism and rule-based order is the way to achieve this end state.

Mr. Chair

4. The world has witnessed increased military spending over the last few years. This breeds mistrust, and gives an indication that States have reverted to the arms race in preparation for military engagement. Increased military expenditure and an arms race are existential threat to global peace and security. Sierra Leone strongly opposes the renewal of the arms race and calls on all Member States to stand together in the global fight against increased military spending and reignition of the arms race. Savings made on Military expenditure can be used in other areas in pursuit of sustainable development.
5. Sierra Leone is accordingly concerned about the slow rate of progress made by the Conference on Disarmament and the Disarmament Commission. This slow rate of progress, however, is of grave concern. We therefore call on all member States to remove all obstacles and challenges that negatively impact the resumption of the Conference of Disarmament and to advance the work of the Commission.

Mr. Chair,

6. Sierra Leone is pleased with the progress made so far with the entry into force of the Treaty on Prohibition of Nuclear Weapon (TPNW) in January this year. We note that more remains to be done especially by Nuclear Weapon State (NWS) as less progress has been made on nuclear disarmament. Total and complete disarmament, that is, the elimination of nuclear, biological, chemical and other Weapons of Mass Destruction is the only guaranty to global peace and security. Sierra Leone therefore welcomes the New START treaty and also calls on all Nuclear Weapon States (NWS) to engage both bilaterally and multilaterally to eliminate nuclear weapons in their political and military strategies.

7. Sierra Leone remains committed to the signing and ratification of the TPNW and Non Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT) and looks forward to the 10th NPT Review Conference early next year.

Mr. Chair,
8. While we advocate for the elimination of the use nuclear weapons, we wish to underscore the point that all States reserve the right to develop and use nuclear energy for peaceful use. No treaty should be used as a pretext to prevent transfer, research, and the development of nuclear energy by non-nuclear weapon States for peaceful use. We supports the peaceful use of nuclear energy and technologies with strong focus on socio-economic growth and development.

Mr. Chair,

9. Outer space is a global commons. Sierra Leone is therefore concerned about the development of strategies and plans to make space a domain for future war. Sierra Leone therefore strongly rejects an arms race in outer space, and we further call on all States to support the prevention of weaponization of outer space.

10. Sierra Leone also calls for a demonstrable responsible behavior in cyber space, in compliance with international rules relating to States’ engagement in cyber space. Without compliance to agreed rules to regulate cyber space, our world and shared prosperity remain at risks to cyber-attacks. We call on all parties engaged in malicious advances in digital tools to refrain from such acts, and we also urge for de-escalation in hostile activities, with a call for all parties to seek peaceful means to resolve concerns relating to cyber-attacks.

Mr. Chair,
11. Sierra Leone, during its presidency of the Seventh Conference of States Parties (CSP7) to the Arms Trade Treaty (ATT) worked with all delegations and made tremendous progress in strengthening efforts to eradicate Small Arms and Light Weapons. As a post-conflict country, we agree with the view that illicit trade, poor management of stockpiles of Small Arms and Light Weapons (SALWs) fuel armed conflicts, undermines the rule of law and respect for international humanitarian law as well as international human rights law.

12. Based on our experience, Sierra Leone made a conscious decision to choose as its thematic focus the need to strengthening efforts to eradicate the illicit trade in small arms and light weapons and ensuring efficient stockpile management. This thematic focus was intended to engage all States Parties and other stakeholders to link ATT implementation efforts firmly to the global framework for arms control, non-proliferation, and disarmament.

13. The efficacy of the ATT as a global instrument for arms control requires a sustained, integrated and collaborative approach towards addressing the problems of illicit trade in conventional arms, including SALW, by ensuring accountable and transparent arms export control systems and by enhancing safe and secured accounting, storage and disposal of weapons by States.

14. To ensure the Treaty’s efficacy in this context, the ATT provisions that seek to tackle illicit trafficking and mitigate diversion risks must be implemented alongside other relevant international and regional instruments. One such instrument that has already made significant progress in
developing good practice in tackling the illicit trade in SALW and enhancing stockpile security is the UN Programme of Action on SALW. Member States are thus encouraged to harmonise their actions on SALW in line with this instrument.

15. Mr. Chair, let me conclude by noting that Sierra Leone welcomes the outcome document of BMS7 and support the Programme of Action to Prevent, Combat and Eradicate the Illicit Trade in Small Arms and Light Weapons and call for its speedy implementation as we also look forward to the BMS 8.

16. I thank you