



PERMANENT MISSION OF NIGERIA TO THE UNITED NATIONS

828 SECOND AVENUE • NEW YORK, N.Y. 10017 • TEL. (212) 953-9130 • FAX (212) 697-1970

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STATEMENT

OF

THE AFRICAN GROUP

Delivered by

LAWRENCE OLUFEMI OBISAKIN
MINISTER, PERMANENT MISSION OF NIGERIA

AT THE

GENERAL DEBATE OF THE FIRST COMMITTEE
63RD SESSION OF THE UNITED NATIONS
GENERAL ASSEMBLY

NEW YORK, 6TH OCTOBER, 2008

On behalf of the African Group, I wish to congratulate you on your election as the chairman of the First Committee of this 63rd United Nations General Assembly. Through you, the African Group wishes also to felicitate with the other members of the Bureau. We are *confident that you will bring your experience in the field of diplomacy to steer the work of our Committee and its proceedings* to a successful conclusion. The African group is hereby assuring you of its unflinching support and unalloyed co-operation in *addressing the tasks ahead of us.*

2. *The African Group wishes to associate itself with the statement of the Non-Aligned Movement earlier delivered by Indonesia, and reiterates its commitment to the principle of promotion of International peace and stability based on the principles of undiminished security for all States. The Group remains strong on its commitment to the achievement of general and complete*

disarmament under strict and effective international control. . The Group wishes to express its strong belief in the achievement of the goals, principles and objectives of non-proliferation of nuclear weapons in line with the provisions of the Treaty on Non-Proliferation of Nuclear weapons, and commitments agreed at the 1995 Review Extension Conference, in particular the Resolution on the Middle East as well as the agreed 13 practical steps adopted at the 2000 Review conference. Africa also believes that multilateralism and solutions derived therefrom, especially within the ambit of the instrumentality of the United Nations charter, will expedite achievement of most, if not all of our goals

3. We call on all delegations to demonstrate flexibility and the necessary political will to enhance progress in the issue of disarmament and non-proliferation.

4. The African Group remains convinced that nuclear weapons pose the greatest threat to *mankind and its civilization*. *It is therefore imperative that the International Community should agree on the Commencement without further delay of multilateral negotiations*

leading to an early conclusion of a convention prohibiting the development, production, testing, deployment, stockpiling, transfer, threat of use or use of nuclear weapons and on their total elimination. *In order to realize the objective, the Group calls on Nuclear Weapon States to commit themselves to stopping the qualitative improvement, development, production and stockpiling of nuclear warheads and their delivery systems. Pending the total elimination of those weapons, a legally binding international instrument should be established under which nuclear-weapon States undertake not to use or threaten to use nuclear weapons against non-nuclear weapon States. The African Group stresses the importance of ensuring that any nuclear disarmament process be irreversible, transparent and verifiable in order for it to be meaningful and effective.*

5. Africa Group recognizes that the first special session of the General Assembly devoted to disarmament made *landmark decisions* in the history of multilateral efforts to achieve disarmament, in particular nuclear disarmament. The Group once again wishes to

express its regret at the non-implementation of the Final Document of that session (resolution S-10/2) three decades after it was adopted. The Group *therefore* underscores the need to convene a fourth special session of the General Assembly devoted to disarmament in order to give real meaning to the nuclear disarmament process. In this connection, the group welcomes the momentum generated by the Working group under the chairmanship of Ambassador LABBE of Chile.

6. The African Group reiterates its long-standing support for the total elimination of all nuclear testing. The Group stresses the significance of achieving universal adherence to the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty (CTBT), including by all nuclear-weapon States, which, among other things, should contribute to the process of nuclear disarmament

7. The African Group emphasizes the importance of strengthening existing multilateral arms control and disarmament agreements by ensuring full compliance with, and effective implementation of, those agreements, including their universality.

8. The Group also reaffirms its strong belief in strengthening the existing disarmament machinery as a means of advancing the process of nuclear disarmament. The Group calls on the Conference on Disarmament being the sole multilateral negotiating body on disarmament, to agree on a work programme as soon as possible so that substantive negotiations can start.

9. The African group laments the lack of any substantive progress in the previous cycle of the United Nations Disarmament Commission (UNDC) and calls upon all Member States to show flexibility and adequate political will to create the atmosphere sufficiently favourable to consensus during the forthcoming cycle of negotiations.

10. The African Group reiterates its support for the concept of internationally recognized nuclear-weapon-free zones established on the basis of arrangements freely arrived at among the States of the regions concerned. We are appealing to all stake holders for the ratification of the treaty of Pelindaba, on the establishment of an

African nuclear-weapon-free zone, by the required number of States, so that it can enter into force without further delay.

11. The African Group calls on States to take appropriate measures to prevent any dumping of nuclear, chemical and radioactive wastes that would infringe on the sovereignty of States. The Group also calls for the effective implementation of the International Atomic Energy Agency Code of Practice on the International Transboundary Movement of Radioactive Waste as a means of enhancing the protection of all States from the dumping of radioactive wastes on their territories.

12. The African Group wishes to express its concern at the illicit transfer, manufacture and circulation of small arms and light weapons. In this connection, the African group wishes to state that the framework of the Third Biennial Meeting of States (BMS) on national and regional implementation of the Programme of Action to prevent, combat and eradicate the illicit trade in SALW, should be pursued with vigour. Africa also wishes to draw attention to the necessity of focusing more on the needs of the developing countries

for technical and financial empowerment to enable them address adequately the menace of illicit SALW.

13. Africa Wishes to underscore the inalienable rights of the developing countries to engage in the research, production and use of nuclear energy for peaceful purposes.

Mr. Chairman,

14. We like to express appreciation for the renewed impetus recently given to the UN regional center for peace and disarmament, in Lome, Togo to enable it play an important role in promoting peace, security, arms control and disarmament. However, we believe that the center still needs the continuing support of the UN.

15. In conclusion, the African Group wishes to appeal to all delegations to demonstrate sufficient flexibility and requisite political good will during this session of the First Committee negotiations. On its part, the African group will like to assure you once again of its readiness to participate fully and constructively in all negotiations.

I thank you.