



PERMANENT MISSION OF NIGERIA TO THE UNITED NATIONS

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**STATEMENT OF THE AFRICAN GROUP**

**BY**

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PERMANENT MISSION OF NIGERIA TO THE UNITED  
NATIONS**

**ON BEHALF OF THE AFRICAN GROUP**

**AT THE**

**GENERAL DEBATE ON ALL DISARMAMENT AND  
INTERNATIONAL SECURITY AGENDA ITEMS OF THE  
FIRST COMMITTEE**

**NEW YORK, MONDAY 3 OCTOBER 2011.**

Mr. Chairman,

I am honoured to speak on behalf of the African Group and to formally congratulate you, Mr. Chairman, on your election. I am also glad to extend same felicitation to members of the Bureau. The African Group believes that your diplomatic experience, skill and tact will stand you in good stead, as you guide our various meetings and deliberations to successful conclusions.

The African Group assures you of active engagement and full cooperation as we address the many tasks ahead of us during the 66<sup>th</sup> Session of the General Assembly. The Group associates itself with the Statement of the Non-Aligned Movement delivered by the distinguished Permanent Representative of Indonesia, and reiterates its commitment to the promotion of international peace and security.

Africa believes that multilateralism and solutions derived there from, especially within the ambit of the instrumentality of the Charter of the United Nations (UN), will expedite achievement of most of our goals. While noting the contributions of efforts being made at other levels, we believe that multilateral negotiations remain the appropriate and effective means to address matters of disarmament and international peace and security. The African Group re-affirms that the UN is the appropriate forum to address all issues of disarmament and arms control. The Group therefore views the First Committee as an essential component of the United Nations.

The African Group again emphasizes its principled positions on nuclear disarmament, which remain its highest priority, and on the related issue of nuclear non-proliferation in all its aspects. The ultimate aim in the disarmament process is general and complete disarmament under strict and effective international control, based on the principle of undiminished and enhanced security for all States.

The Group re-affirms that there is absolutely no doubt that the NPT is the cornerstone of general and complete disarmament and non-proliferation efforts, under strict and effective international control, as, among others, affirmed and itemised by Article VI of the Nuclear Non- Proliferation Treaty (NPT). In our view, Article VI offers no ambiguity on the obligations of Nuclear Weapons States to disarm. In fact, it provides a formal and specific disarmament responsibility on them, in good faith.

The Group wishes to express its strong belief in the achievement of the principles and objectives of the Non-Proliferation Treaty, in line with the provisions of the Treaty and the commitments agreed to at the 1995 Review and Extension Conference; in particular, the resolution on the Middle East (NPT/CONF.1995/32 (Part I) Annex and the agreed 13 practical steps adopted at the 2000 Review Conference (NPT/CONF.2000/28 (Parts I and II) as well as Resolution 65/42 adopted without a vote on 26 October 2010.

To that end, the African Group welcomes the adoption, by consensus, of the conclusions and recommendations for follow-on actions of the 2010 NPT Review Conference (NPT/CONF.2010/50 (Vol. I)), mandating the Secretary-General and the co-sponsors of the 1995 resolution on the Middle East, in consultation with the States of the region, to convene a conference in 2012, to be attended by all States of the Middle East, on the establishment of a Middle East zone free of nuclear weapons and all other weapons of mass destruction.

We further reaffirm that the International Atomic Energy Agency remains the sole competent authority responsible for verifying and assuring compliance by States Parties with their safeguards agreements undertaken in fulfillment of their Treaty obligations.

The Group notes the High-Level meeting on Nuclear Safety and Security, convened at the instance of the Secretary-General on 22 September 2011 with a view to promote the highest levels of international standards of nuclear safety and security.

The African Group is convinced that the early ratification of the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty (CTBT) by the remaining nuclear-weapon States that have not yet ratified the Treaty, will contribute to its entry into force to bring into effect a comprehensive ban on nuclear test explosions.

We call on all States to refrain from any action that would defeat the objective of CTBT and believes that the Treaty's entry into force will greatly contribute to strengthen international security. We, therefore, welcome the recent ratification of the CTBT by Ghana and Guinea as a positive development and a step in good direction.

Pending the total elimination of nuclear weapons, the African Group restates its call for a legally binding international instrument to 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 transparent, verifiable and irreversible in order to be meaningful and effective.

The African Group reaffirms its strong belief in strengthening the existing disarmament machinery and stresses the need to convene the Fourth Special Session of the General Assembly devoted to Disarmament (SSOD - IV), in order to effectively promote the nuclear disarmament process. 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.

As the UN Disarmament Commission enters a new decade and cycle, the African Group calls upon all Member States to demonstrate flexibility and adequate political will to create an atmosphere sufficiently favourable to a consensus outcome of concrete recommendations. We restate the need for a more practical and effective approach for deliberations on specific disarmament issues at the UNDC.

The Group notes the highlights of the Follow-up to the High-level Meeting on Revitalizing the Work of the Conference on Disarmament and Taking Forward Multilateral Disarmament Negotiations, convened by the President of the 65th General Assembly and held on 27 July 2011.

The African Group re-affirms that the Conference on Disarmament is the sole multilateral negotiating body on disarmament. The Group noted the adoption of the programme of work for the 2009 session (CD/1864) by the CD on 29 May 2009, which was not implemented. The African Group calls on the CD to agree, by consensus, on a balanced and comprehensive programme of work.

The Group also calls for the cooperation of nuclear-weapon States in this regard. The African Group notes the entry into force of the Pelindaba Treaty on 15 July 2009 and particularly calls upon the Nuclear-Weapon States that have not yet ratified the relevant annexes to the African Nuclear-Weapon-Free Zone Treaty, to ratify the Treaty protocols without further delay, in order to ensure its effectiveness.

The African Group calls on all States to take strict and effective measures to prevent any dumping of nuclear, chemical and/or radioactive wastes. As a means of enhancing the protection of all States from the dumping of radioactive wastes on their territories, 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 (INFCIRC/386). Africa also underscores the inalienable right of the non-nuclear-weapon States to engage in the research, production and use of nuclear energy for peaceful purposes.

The African Group takes note of the outcome of the Fourth Biennial Meeting of States to Consider the 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 (A/CONF.192/BMS/2010/3). The Group believes that the Programme's full implementation should be vigorously pursued.

The African Group expresses its concern at the illicit transfer, manufacture and circulation of small arms and light weapons. Similarly, the Group commends the Meeting of Governmental Experts as a robust exercise to articulate some of the key elements of the PoA. We hereby draw attention to the call to focus on the needs of the developing countries; for technical and financial empowerment to enable them to address adequately, the menace of illicit small arms and light weapons.

The year 2012 holds enormous promises as well as challenges, in view of the many issues dear to the hearts of all Member-States. As we move closer to the Preparatory Committee and the Review Conference of the PoA next year, the African Group calls on Member-States to be open in their dialogue with a view to providing necessary support and assistance for the Chair-designate.

While not being among the world's major producers and exporters of conventional weapons, many African States have suffered disproportionately from the pernicious effects of the illicit transfer of arms, which has destabilizing effects on their socio-economic stability. In this connection, the African Group takes note of the on-going arms trade treaty process. The African Group is of the firm view that this process should aim at a treaty that is universal, balanced, fair and resistant to any political abuse. Member-States have demonstrated commitment to the ATT Process and as we prepare for the last PrepCom and Conference on an ATT, we hope that remaining issues will be discussed in a mutually agreeable

atmosphere.

We express appreciation for the renewed impetus so far given to the United Nations Regional Centre for Peace and Disarmament in Africa, located in Lomé, Togo, and restate that the Centre still needs the continuing support of the United Nations. The African Group intends to submit a resolution on the need to further galvanize the Centre, during this session.

The African Group appeals to all delegations to demonstrate adequate flexibility and the requisite political goodwill during this session of First Committee negotiations. On its part, the African Group assures the Committee once again of its readiness to participate fully and constructively in all negotiations.

I thank you.