



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  
BY  
H.E. USMAN SARKI  
AMBASSADOR/DEPUTY PERMANENT REPRESENTATIVE  
OF NIGERIA TO THE  
UNITED NATIONS  
ON BEHALF OF THE AFRICAN GROUP  
AT THE  
67TH SESSION OF THE UN GENERAL ASSEMBLY  
GENERAL DEBATE ON ALL DISARMAMENT AND  
INTERNATIONAL SECURITY AGENDA ITEMS OF THE  
FIRST COMMITTEE**

**NEW YORK, MONDAY 8 OCTOBER, 2012.**

Mr. Chairman,

I am honoured to speak on behalf of the African Group.

At the outset, let me congratulate you on your election as the Chair of the First Committee for the 67<sup>th</sup> Session of the UNGA. We believe your vast experience on the issues at hand will guide our debates and negotiations in the coming days. Let me also seize this opportunity to felicitate other members of the Bureau on their election.

The African Group assures you of its full support and cooperation in this month long deliberations and promises substantive contributions in our efforts to discuss issues of Disarmament and International security. The Group aligns itself with the Statement of the Non-Aligned Movement read by the distinguished representative of Indonesia.

The year 2012 has been rightly described as a Disarmament Year. Indeed, we have seen renewed efforts dedicated to addressing a wide spectrum of disarmament and international security issues. We note, among others, the Diplomatic Conference of the Arms Trade Treaty, the Seoul Nuclear Security Summit, the NPT PrepCom, the Second Review Conference on the implementation of the Programme of Action on Small Arms and Light Weapons and the Third Meeting of States Parties to the Convention on Cluster Munitions among others.

These meetings and events highlighted a number of global challenges to Disarmament and Security and ways to address them. In this regard, the African Group wishes to seize this opportunity, to express its views regarding some of the issues affecting global security.

The Group continues to underscore the total validity of multilateral diplomacy in the field of disarmament, non-proliferation and international security. We are convinced that this is the most appropriate way to address global disarmament issues. This should continue to be observed in accordance with the principles and objectives enshrined in the UN Charter.

In this regard, we will continue to work across all regions and to cooperate with other partners to promote multilateralism as an abiding principle for negotiations in the areas of disarmament, non-proliferation and international security. The Group will always support efforts geared towards addressing all threats to multilateralism.

## NUCLEAR DISARMAMENT

Mr. Chairman,

No Member State of the African Group is a nuclear weapon state (nws). Our continent continues to enjoy the status of a region free of nuclear weapons. We wish to seize this opportunity to re-iterate our support for complete nuclear disarmament, as the utmost prerequisite for world peace and security. We also wish to stress that the continued existence and possession of nuclear weapons do not necessarily guarantee security, but an affirmation of the probability and risks of their future use. In our view, this remains an existential threat to global peace and the future survival of the human race.

In the light of this, the African Group calls on all UN member States to support the goal of nuclear disarmament and work assiduously for the total elimination of all nuclear arsenals. We also call on nuclear-weapon States to achieve the total elimination of their nuclear arsenals in fulfilment of relevant multilateral legal obligations and the agreed global norm of a world free of nuclear weapons and all other weapons of mass destruction.

We stress the need for nws to cease plans to further modernize, upgrade, refurbish, or extend the lives of their nuclear weapons and related facilities. This is with a view to eventually prohibiting their development, production, acquisition, testing, stockpiling, transfer and working towards the complete elimination of their nuclear weapons.

We continue to reaffirm that the total elimination of nuclear weapons remains the only absolute guarantee against the use or threat of use of nuclear weapons, and further restate our call for effective assurances to all non-nuclear-weapon states (nnws) against the use or threat of use of nuclear weapons by nuclear weapons

states (nws). We also support, as a high priority, the call for the conclusion of a universal, unconditional and legally binding instrument on negative security assurances to all NNWS, pending the total elimination of nuclear weapons.

Mr. Chairman,

The African Group welcomes the convening of the first session of the Preparatory Committee for the 2015 NPT Review Conference in Vienna, Austria, earlier this year. While recognizing the contribution of this meeting, we reiterate the need for the full implementation of the action plans adopted at the 2010 NPT Review Conference with regards to nuclear disarmament, nuclear non-proliferation, peaceful uses of nuclear energy, and the implementation of the 1995 resolution on the Middle-East.

The African Group also stresses the importance of achieving universal adherence to the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty (CTBT), bearing in mind the special responsibilities of nws in this regard. The achievement of such objective could serve as threshold for promoting the process of nuclear disarmament.

Mr. Chairman,

At the 66th Session, the African Group joined other member-States to reaffirm the importance of the Conference on Disarmament (CD), not only as the sole multilateral negotiating body on disarmament, but one which could be useful to unlocking the impasse in nuclear disarmament negotiations. We wish to again reiterate our call on the urgent need for the CD to agree on a comprehensive and balanced program of work.

The Group believes that a workable and agreeable programme of work is realizable but such must be based on a balanced approach to disarmament. We call on the CD to intensify efforts towards this objective as soon as possible. Notwithstanding the constructive efforts in the past, there is the need for the CD to pursue a workable programme of work in its forthcoming session.

Mr. Chairman,

The African Group underlines the importance of intensified efforts geared towards the establishment in the Middle East of a nuclear-weapon-free zone and lends its strong support for the achievement of this noble objective - a Middle East zone free of nuclear weapons and other weapons of mass destruction.

As highlighted in the Group's Statement last year, we consider this as an integral part of the efforts geared towards the full implementation of the NPT 2010 Review Conference final outcome and the 1995 Resolution on the Middle East. We call on member States of the UN to support the full implementation of the resolution.

At the 66th Session, the African Group welcomed the announcement of the 2012 Conference to be convened at the end of this year in Helsinki, Finland, on the subject of the establishment of a Middle East zone free of nuclear weapons and all other weapons of mass destruction. We remain committed to this objective and call on the UN Secretary General, co-sponsors of the 1995 Resolution; and indeed, all stakeholders to ensure the success of the Conference.

## CONVENTIONAL WEAPONS

### Arms Trade Treaty

Mr. Chairman,

The Diplomatic Conference on an Arms Trade Treaty convened in New York from 2-27 July 2012 did not achieve its stated objective. We noted that there was a general support among member-States on the need to establish of a common international standard for the import, export and transfer of conventional arms.

We regret the lack of consensus on the draft text presented by the President to serve as the basis for negotiation on the envisaged Treaty. However, considerations of this important future instrument should be approached with the understanding that the Treaty is practically achievable with the cooperation of all. We believe such a

treaty should take due cognizance of, and reaffirm the sovereign right of States to acquire, manufacture, export, import and retain conventional arms and their parts and components for their self-defence and security needs.

Member States should also note that an unregulated conventional arms transfer system fuels the illicit trade and, in some cases, leads to unfettered access and unauthorized use by non-State actors. In such scenario, no country appears immune to the indiscriminate use of conventional weapons by unauthorized individuals and/or groups.

In view of the above, we call on member States to seize the momentum provided by the July 2012 Conference to forge, in the near future, an acceptable Treaty that addresses the gaps created by unregulated transfer in conventional arms, and one which places no undue restriction in the way of sovereign right of States for self-defence.

### **UN POA ON SMALL ARMS AND LIGHT WEAPONS**

The African Group welcomes the successful conclusion of the Second Review Conference on the implementation of the UN Programme of Action on Small Arms and Light Weapons (SALW). Illicit small arms and light weapons contribute to destabilization and mayhem. Several States have witnessed the negative effects of their unauthorized use by non-State actors.

We are encouraged by the positive engagements between member States which characterized the entire process of the Second Review Conference. We commend the efforts of its President, Facilitators and distinguished delegates of all member States in this endeavour. We consider the adoption of the consensus Outcome Document as signaling a renewed commitment by member-States to rid the world of the scourge of the illicit trade in Small Arms and Light Weapons.

We continue to emphasize the importance of a balanced, full and effective implementation of the Second Review Conference of the UN Programme of Action on SALW. In this regard, we wish to particularly

stress that international cooperation and assistance is essential in the full implementation of the Programme of Action.

Finally, Mr. Chairman, the African Group wishes to place on record, the importance of political will and transparency in addressing international disarmament and security issues. We believe our deliberations in the coming days will be guided by the need to advance the work of the First Committee and the course of peace and international security. In this regard, the Group will be submitting following resolutions, for which we seek the support of all delegations. These are:

African Nuclear-Weapon-Free Zone Treaty

United Nations Regional Centre for Peace and Disarmament in Africa

I thank you for your attention.