



PERMANENT MISSION OF NIGERIA TO THE UNITED NATIONS

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STATEMENT

BY

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OF NIGERIA TO THE UNITED NATIONS**

ON BEHALF OF THE AFRICAN GROUP

68TH SESSION OF THE UN GENERAL ASSEMBLY

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

NEW YORK, MONDAY 7TH OCTOBER 2013.

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 68th Session of the UNGA. The African Group is particularly delighted to have one of our own steering this meeting. We believe your vast experience on the issues before us at this session will guide our debates and negotiations. Let me also seize the opportunity to congratulate other members of the Bureau on their election.

The African Group remains committed to the work of this Committee and assures you of full cooperation in the course of deliberations on Disarmament and International Security. The Group aligns itself with the Statement of the Non-Aligned Movement delivered by the distinguished Permanent Representative of Indonesia.

The 67th Session of this Assembly witnessed renewed efforts to address a wide spectrum of disarmament and international security issues. Indeed, the Group notes that the period 2012-2013 witnessed two conferences on the Arms Trade Treaty, two Preparatory Committee Meetings (PrepCom) of the 2015 Review Conference of the NPT, the 2nd Review Conference on the implementation of the Programme of Action on Small Arms and Light Weapons, and the process that led to the recently-concluded High-level Meeting on Nuclear Disarmament.

Aside from regular statutory actions by this Assembly, these meetings and events, including next year's 5th Biennial Meeting of States on UN PoA on SALWs, the 3rd Session of the PrepCom on the 2015 Review Conference of the NPT and the Meeting of States Parties on Biological Weapons Convention among others, remind us of the growing challenges to issues of Disarmament and International Security. We must therefore seek for appropriate multilateral approach to address these issues through constructive debates, deliberations and negotiations as acceptable norms established by this body.

The Group continues to underscore the absolute validity of multilateral diplomacy in the field of disarmament, non-proliferation and international security and restates that there are no substitutes for multilateral approach to addressing global disarmament issues, in accordance with the principles and objectives enshrined in

the UN Charter. In this context, the African Group welcomes the opportunity to express its views regarding some of the issues affecting global security.

Mr. Chairman,

The African Group re-iterates support for complete nuclear disarmament, as the utmost prerequisite for world peace and security and no Member State of the African Group is a Nuclear Weapon State (NWS). The Group recalls the entry into force of the Treaty of Pelindaba in 2010, which makes Africa a nuclear-weapon-free zone and provides a shield for the African territory by preventing the stationing of nuclear explosive devices on the continent and prohibiting testing of nuclear explosive devices among others.

In this regard, the African Group acknowledges the useful purposes served by the establishment of nuclear-weapon-free zones in the consolidation of the NPT and addressing nuclear disarmament and non-proliferation in its region as well as in other regions of the world. We restate 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. Our world, including the outer space, must be free of nuclear weapons and other weapons of mass destruction. The presence of nuclear weapons on this planet constitutes an existential threat to global peace and the future survival of the human race. The Group commends NAM's initiatives on this critical challenge to international security and welcomes the just concluded High-level Meeting on Nuclear Disarmament held on 26 September, 2013.

In the light of this, the African Group endorses the road map proposed by NAM as follows:

First, early commencement of negotiations, in the Conference on Disarmament, on a comprehensive convention on nuclear weapons for the prohibition of their possession, development, production, acquisition, testing, stockpiling, transfer, use or threat of use, and destruction

Second, the designation of 26 September every year as an international day to renew our resolve to completely eliminate nuclear weapons.

Third, to convene a High-level International Conference on Nuclear Disarmament in 2018, to review progress made pursuant to the High-level

Meeting. We invite all governments and civil society, academia, and media to join hands in making this road map a reality.

Nuclear Weapons States should support the goal of nuclear disarmament and work for the total elimination of their nuclear arsenals, in fulfillment of relevant multilateral legal obligations and agreed global norm of a world free of nuclear weapons and all other weapons of mass destruction. To ensure this, the Group stresses the need for the NWS to cease their further modernization, upgrading, refurbishment, or extending the lives of their nuclear weapons and related facilities. This is with a view to prohibiting their development, production, acquisition, testing, stockpiling, transfer and working towards the complete elimination of these weapons.

The Group continues to reaffirm that the total elimination of nuclear weapons remains the only absolute guarantee against the use or threat of use of nuclear weapons. The African Group also supports, 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.

The Group calls on nuclear weapons states to de-emphasize security dependence on nuclear weapons and considers any doctrine justifying their use as unacceptable. While ideas such as "de-targeting", "de-alerting operational readiness" and reducing the current number of nuclear weapons are steps in the right direction, it needs to be stressed that these concepts alone should not be mistaken as a substitute for the total elimination of nuclear weapons.

The African Group notes the concern expressed during the second session of the Preparatory Committee for the 2015 NPT Review Conference about the lack of progress towards the implementation of the 2010 Action Plan. We reiterate the need for us all to abide by the spirit and letter of the Treaty.

The African Group strongly supports the establishment of a nuclear-weapon-free zone in the Middle East. Pending its establishment, the Group urges Israel, the only country in the region that has not joined the NPT, nor declared its intention to do so, to renounce any possession of nuclear weapons, and accede to the NPT without precondition and further delay.

The Group expresses deep concern at the fact that the conference on the establishment of a zone free of nuclear weapons and all other weapons of mass

destruction in the Middle East due to have been held in 2012 has not yet been convened, despite the consensus decision of the 2010 NPT Review Conference. The continuing delay in convening the conference runs contrary to the letter and spirit of the 1995 Resolution. The group urges the unconditional participation of all States in the Middle East, including Israel

In this context, the African Group also calls on the remaining States that have not ratified the Biological and Chemical Weapons Conventions to do so without delay; in particular, the remaining States that have not ratified the Chemical Weapons Convention, as an arms-control agreement that outlaws the production, stockpiling and use of such weapons to immediately commence the process and ensure speedy ratification.

Mr. Chairman,

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 Nuclear Weapons States in this regard. The CTBT offers a hope of halting further development or proliferation of nuclear weapons. The Group, therefore, welcomes the convening of the Eighth Ministerial Conference on Facilitating the Entry into Force of the CTBT on 27th September 2013, but regrets the non-entry into force of the treaty almost thirty years after the conclusion of negotiations. The Group supports the international community which has remained committed to promoting a treaty that could serve as threshold for promoting the process of nuclear disarmament. We encourage Annex II countries, in particular those yet to accede to the NPT, to sign and ratify the CTBT.

Mr. Chairman,

The African Group joins 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 unlock the impasse in nuclear disarmament negotiations. We wish to reiterate our call on the urgent need for the CD to agree on a comprehensive and balanced program of work. In this regard, the Group notes all the efforts and proposals in the CD, as well as the adoption of the programme of work for the 2009 session (CD/1864), by the CD on 29 May 2009 which was not implemented. A reinvigorated CD should be supported to deliver on its objectives.

We also need to work to enrich the level of deliberations in the United Nations Disarmament Commission (UNDC) and at the level of the First Committee. In this context, the Group stresses the importance of the UN disarmament machinery and emphasizes the significance of preserving and strengthening the nature, role and purpose of each part of this machinery.

Mr. Chairman,

The African Group welcomes the adoption of the Arms Trade Treaty (ATT) resolution on 2 April 2013 “to elaborate a legally binding instrument on the highest possible common international standards for the international transfer of conventional arms”, which should be implemented in a balanced and objective manner that protects the interests of all States and not just the major international producing and exporting States.

The full and balanced implementation of the treaty is practically achievable with the cooperation of all. The Group recognizes and reaffirms 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 in accordance with the UN Charter.

The Group acknowledges 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, where no one may be immune to their indiscriminate use by unauthorized individuals and/or groups. The Group urges major arms suppliers to ratify the treaty and upholds such ratification upon its entry into force.

The Group wishes to encourage Member States to address the gaps created by the unregulated transfer of conventional and calls for no undue restriction to be placed in the way of the sovereign right of States to acquire conventional arms for self-defence.

The African Group remains deeply concerned over the illicit trade, transfer, manufacture, possession and circulation of small arms and light weapons, their excessive accumulation and uncontrolled spread in many regions of the world, particularly in Africa.

Having successfully concluded the Second Review Conference on the implementation of the UN Programme of Action, 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, the Group stresses that international cooperation and assistance is essential to the full implementation of the Programme of Action. The Group looks forward to 5th Biennial Meeting of States on UN PoA on SALWs in 2014 and promises its full support for the Chair-designate, in ensuring a successful outcome.

Finally, Mr. Chairman, the African Group wishes to restate the importance of political will and transparency in addressing international disarmament and security issues. We believe our deliberations in the coming days should be guided by the need to advance the work of the First Committee and enhance the course of peace. In this connection, the Group will be submitting the following resolutions, for which we seek the support of all delegations. These are: **African Nuclear-Weapon-Free Zone Treaty and the United Nations Regional Centre for Peace and Disarmament in Africa.**

I thank you for your attention.