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STATEMENT BY

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AMBASSADOR/PERMANENT REPRESENTATIVE OF NIGERIA
TO THE UNITED NATIONS
AT THE**

**GENERAL DEBATE OF THE FIRST COMMITTEE SESSION
OF THE 72ND UNITED NATIONS GENERAL ASSEMBLY**

NEW YORK, 04 OCTOBER, 2017

Mr. Chairman,

The delegation of Nigeria congratulates you on your election as Chairman of the First Committee at this Session as well as other members of the bureau. Our work will indeed benefit from your tremendous experience, expertise and commitment. We therefore assure you of our full support and cooperation. Let me also seize this opportunity to commend your predecessor, Ambassador Sabri Boukadoum, for his leadership and laudable efforts. My delegation welcomes the remarks made by the President of the General Assembly and the High Representative for Disarmament Affairs. Finally, Nigeria aligns itself with the Statement of the Non-Aligned Movement and the African Group and would like to make the following Statement in national capacity.

2. At the 71st Session, my delegation joined other Member States to highlight the daunting challenges confronting our world. Sadly, little has changed presently, to provide confidence and reduce the enormous challenges to global peace and security. We are, in fact, faced with more challenges and quandaries, all of which justify the need to re-double our efforts and stridently work for global peace and security. In this regard, building the right momentum and multilateral approach involves concerted efforts and a new plan for action.

3. In the context of threats to international peace and security, my delegation continues to highlight the astronomical proportion of global defence budgets, including the enormous resources devoted to the maintenance and upgrading of nuclear arsenal systems by nuclear weapons States, as well as unfettered access to wide-ranging collection of conventional weapons by unauthorized non-state actors.

4. Today, the dangers and effects of uncontrolled access to conventional weapons, including small arms and light weapons, are witnessed all around us. From Africa to the Middle East; across Europe to the Americas and Asia, the carnage has become phenomenal and unprecedented, particularly the immense bloodshed foisted on innocent population by terrorists, insurgents, criminals and gangs members respectively. We have witnessed cities and communities destroyed and/or deserted, including the heavy losses of precious lives, property, toll on livelihood and forced mass migration. In most cases, these mindless aggression are largely enabled and effectively supported by illicitly procured or transferred arms by non-state entities. These are the weapons used indiscriminately by terrorists and other bandits to unleash mayhem and massacre of innocent civilians, including women and children.

Mr. Chairman,

5. The *raison d'être* for the overwhelming support and adoption of the landmark ATT resolution in 2014, was the need to present a common front to robustly respond to the threat posed to international peace and security by the non-regulation of conventional weapons. In this regard, my delegation welcomes the outcome of the Third Conference of States Parties to the Arms Trade Treaty held last month in Geneva. We must continue to do the needful, by standing with States Parties and other Signatories to this Treaty. Recent acts of terrorism and preponderance of insurgent groups across many regions of the world, including in my country, have presented us with the opportunity to take a second look at our positions, obligations and where we stand as nations.

Mr. Chairman,

6. While small arms and light weapons in the hands of criminal gangs, terrorists and other armed groups have continued to decimate lives indiscriminately, nuclear weapons still remain the ultimate agents of mass destruction and their total elimination should be the final objective of all

disarmament processes within the broad spectrum of goals being pursued by the United Nations. To this end, my delegation heartily welcomes the adoption of the landmark Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons which opened for signature on the 20th September, 2017. The delegation of Nigeria remains proud to have participated actively in facilitations and in the process leading to its adoption as well as one of the first countries to sign the treaty. Our commitment was guided by principled position on the denuclearization of the world. We are also mindful of the catastrophic humanitarian consequences that could result from the deliberate or accidental use of nuclear weapons. In view of this, my delegation wishes to restate opposition to modernization of existing nuclear weapons as well as the development of new types.

7. Nuclear test explosions not only send a tense signal to the global political environment, but also have devastating effects on our environment with the spread of radioactive materials to the atmosphere. We all owe a duty to protect the environment by respecting the moratorium against nuclear testing as we work assiduously to achieve the entry into force of the CTBT. In this regard, my delegation welcomes the 10th edition of the Conference on Facilitating the Entry into Force of the Comprehensive Nuclear Test Ban Treaty (CTBT) which took place on the 20th September, 2017 and calls on those countries that have not signed or ratified the CTBT, particularly the Annex 2 states, to do so without further delay.

8. With regard to the recent happenings in the Korean Peninsula, my delegation is worried about the continuous nuclear tests by the Democratic Peoples' Republic of Korea (DPRK). My delegation restates our earlier call for a concerted effort by all Members States of the United Nations in bringing on board representatives of all the regions of the world to weigh in and engage the DPRK regime, with the overall goal of ensuring the denuclearization of the Korean Peninsula.

9. As a State Party to the Treaty of Pelindaba, Nigeria welcomes the establishment of Nuclear Weapon Free Zones (NWFZ) in other parts of the world. The Pelindaba Treaty serves as a shield for the continent of Africa, including by preventing the stationing of nuclear explosive devices on the continent and prohibiting testing of nuclear weapons. As a measure to ensure a world free from the fear or possibility of the use of nuclear weapons, my delegation further calls on all Member States to support efforts to replicate this measure in the remaining parts of the world, including in the Middle East.

Mr. Chairman,

10. Members of the Conference on Disarmament (CD) are again reminded of the need to reflect on whether the current stalemate/circumstances is serving the purposes and objective of its establishment. Notwithstanding the past considerations and actions taken by this body, there is no doubt that the long-standing inability to agree to act on concrete issues has adversely affected the reputation and credibility of the CD. It was our fervent hope that the Members of CD would hasten to do the needful and fulfill the objective for its establishment.

11. In spite of the difficulties encountered in the multilateral disarmament machinery, my delegation remains committed to its objective, as the only measure put in place to fulfill the ethos and objectives of disarmament and international security. We remain hopeful that good judgment would prevail to ensure our understanding of the need to act concertedly and decisively, to address these issues which are of grave concern to humanity.

12. In the course of the plenary meetings, the delegation of Nigeria will be submitting three resolutions on behalf of the African Group, for which we seek the full support of all delegations. These are: "**African Nuclear-Weapon-Free Zone Treaty**", the "**United Nations Regional Centre for**

Peace and Disarmament in Africa" and the "United Nations, Prohibition of the Dumping of Radioactive Wastes".

I thank you.