



PERMANENT MISSION OF NIGERIA TO THE UNITED NATIONS

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**STATEMENT**

**BY**

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

**ON BEHALF OF THE AFRICAN GROUP**

**69<sup>TH</sup> SESSION OF THE UN GENERAL ASSEMBLY**

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

**NEW YORK, MONDAY 7<sup>TH</sup> OCTOBER 2014.**

**Statement by Nigeria  
on behalf of the African Group  
at the General Debate of the First Committee  
on All Disarmament and International Security Agenda Items**

**New York, 07 October, 2014**

**Mr. Chairman,**

1. I am honoured to speak on behalf of the African Group.
2. At the outset, let me congratulate you, Ambassador Courtenay Rattray, on your election as the Chair of the First Committee for the 69<sup>th</sup> Session of the UNGA. As you steer the course of this meeting, we believe your experience will guide our debates and negotiations. Let me seize the opportunity to congratulate other members of the Bureau on their elections. I also wish to commend your predecessor, H.E. Ibrahim O. A. Dabbashi of Libya, for his leadership and laudable efforts.
3. The Group expresses appreciation to Ms. Angela Kane, the High Representative for Disarmament Affairs, for her remarks.
4. The African Group remains committed to the work of this Committee and wishes to assure you of full cooperation in the course of deliberations on disarmament and international security issues. The Group wishes to align itself with the Statement of the Non-Aligned Movement delivered by the distinguished Permanent Representative of Indonesia and wishes to highlight the following:
5. The 68<sup>th</sup> Session of this Assembly witnessed renewed efforts to address a wide spectrum of disarmament and international security issues. Among these were series of regional and multilateral events, workshops and high-level meetings to train, develop capacity and multilaterally negotiate disarmament and arms control measures. In spite of these efforts, however, we are reminded that our world still contends with growing challenges and threats to global security. We need to demilitarize our world by addressing the threat of further weaponization of our globe and the militarization of outer space. 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.

## **NUCLEAR WEAPONS**

6. On 26 September 2014, we commemorated the International Day for the total Elimination of Nuclear Weapons in line with Resolution 68/32 adopted by the General Assembly. The Group fully supports the implementation of the resolution on the follow-up to the 2013 high-level meeting of the General Assembly, including the call for urgent commencement of negotiations in the Conference on Disarmament for the early conclusion of a comprehensive convention on nuclear weapons. The Group expresses appreciation to H.E Mr. Sam Kutesa, the President of the General Assembly, for convening the commemorative Ministerial Meeting and looks forward to the implementation of all measures to actualize the objectives for the declaration of the date as a day set aside to ensure the total elimination of nuclear weapons.

7. The Group underscores 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 and the elimination of nuclear weapons.

**Mr. Chairman,**

8. The Group continues to acknowledge the useful purposes served by the establishment of nuclear-weapon-free zones in the consolidation of the NPT as well as in addressing nuclear disarmament and non-proliferation across all regions of the world. Africa supports the principle of complete nuclear disarmament, as the utmost prerequisite for maintaining international peace and security. The Group recalls the entry into force of the Treaty of Pelindaba on 15<sup>th</sup> July 2009, which re-affirms the status of Africa as a nuclear-weapon-free zone and provides a shield for the African territory, including by preventing the stationing of nuclear explosive devices on the continent and prohibiting testing of those destructive weapons.

9. In the same vein, the African Group strongly supports the establishment of a nuclear-weapon-free zone in the Middle East. The Group expresses deep concern at the fact that commitments and obligations of the 2010 NPT Review Action Plan regarding the establishment of a zone free of nuclear weapons and all other weapons of mass destruction in the Middle East have not been implemented. The Group reiterates that the continuing delay in establishing the Middle East Zone

runs contrary to the letter and spirit of the 1995 Resolution on the Middle East. In this context, the Group urges the unconditional accession of Israel to the NPT as a non nuclear weapon party, and bringing all its nuclear facilities under IAEA comprehensive safeguards.

10. In a world presently saddled with the burden of over 17,000 nuclear warheads, the Group wishes to restate that the continued existence and possession of these weapons do not necessarily guarantee safety and security. Indeed, they are 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, as their presence constitutes an existential threat to our planet, global peace and the future survival of humanity.

11. This year marks the eighteenth anniversary of the adoption of the Comprehensive Nuclear Test Ban Treaty (CTBT) in September 1996 as well as the fifth observance of the International Day against Nuclear Tests designated by the General Assembly. The African Group stresses the importance of achieving universal adherence to the CTBT, bearing in mind the special responsibilities of Nuclear Weapons States in this regard. The Group believes that upon its entry into force, the CTBT will provide a further hope of halting future development or proliferation of nuclear weapons. We encourage the remaining Annex II States, in particular, nuclear weapons states, and those yet to accede to the NPT, to sign and ratify the CTBT without further delay. In this context, the African Group welcomes the recent ratifications of CTBT by Brunei Darussalam, Chad, Guinea-Bissau, Iraq and Niue.

12. The Group stresses the need to de-emphasize security dependence on nuclear weapons and considers any doctrine justifying their use as unacceptable. The Group reaffirms that the total elimination of nuclear weapons remains the only absolute guarantee against their use or threat of use. The Group further supports; as a high priority, the call for the conclusion of a universal, unconditional and legally binding instrument on negative security assurances by nuclear weapons states to all Non Nuclear Weapons States (NNWS), pending the total elimination of nuclear weapons.

13. The African Group re-affirms that the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty (NPT) remains the cornerstone of nuclear disarmament and non-proliferation regime. State Parties to the NPT will yet convene next year for a review of implementation of the treaty, where Africa will serve as President of the IXth

NPT Review Conference. The Group wishes to, therefore, seize this opportunity to seek the commitment and cooperation of all towards the realization of the overall goal of the NPT and the objective of the Review Conference. Without prejudice to the various concerns expressed during the third session of the Preparatory Committee for the 2015 NPT Review Conference in April 2014, about the lack of progress towards the implementation of the 2010 Action Plan, we reiterate the need for all States to abide by the spirit and letter of the NPT and work towards fulfilling its three pillars of nuclear disarmament, non-proliferation of nuclear weapons and the peaceful uses of nuclear energy.

14. The Group further re-affirms that peaceful uses of nuclear energy is an inalienable rights of non-nuclear weapon States Parties to the NPT and calls on the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) to continue to strengthen the technical cooperation programmes and the provision of assistance to developing States. In this regard, the Group underscores that technical cooperation and assistance provided by the IAEA towards meeting the needs of its Member States should not be subjected to conditions beyond the provisions of its Statute.

15. The African Group reiterates its grave concern at the humanitarian consequences of nuclear weapons and calls on all States, particularly the Nuclear Weapons States, to consider the catastrophic humanitarian consequences of any use of these weapons and take measures aimed at voluntary renunciation and dismantling of these inhumane weapons. In this context, the Group welcomes the last two international conferences on the humanitarian impact of nuclear weapons convened in Norway in 2013, Mexico early this year and looks forward to the third conference to be hosted in Austria in December 2014. The Group further welcomes the call made at the Second conference, for the development of a legally binding instrument to prohibit nuclear weapons.

16. The African Group reaffirms the importance of the Conference on Disarmament (CD), not only as the sole multilateral negotiating body on disarmament, but one which should work to unlock the impasse in nuclear disarmament negotiations. The Group reiterates its call on the urgent need for the CD to agree on a comprehensive and balanced program of work. In this regard, the Group welcomes efforts made by the CD in 2014 as highlighted in its final Report to the General Assembly. The Group calls on the CD to work towards the realisation of the objectives for its establishment in its negotiations. .

17. The Group expresses frustration over the inability of the United Nations Disarmament Commission (UNDC) to reach consensus on the recommendations of its Agenda Items, but looks forward to the beginning of a new cycle at the 2015 Substantive Session of the Commission. The Group stresses the importance of the UN disarmament machinery and emphasizes the significance, not only of preserving the Commission, but in the realization of its deliberative objectives in the UN Disarmament machinery.

### OTHER WEAPONS OF MASS DESTRUCTION

18. The Group wishes to highlight the efforts of the international community in addressing any use of chemical weapons and commends all endeavours geared towards the complete and total universal abolition of chemical and biological weapons and all other weapons of mass destruction, and promises its engagement and continued support in this regard.

### CONVENTIONAL WEAPONS

**Mr. Chairman,**

19. At the 68<sup>th</sup> Session, the African Group welcomed the adoption of the Arms Trade Treaty (ATT), "to elaborate a legally binding instrument on the highest possible common international standards for the international transfer of conventional arms". Upon its entry into force on 24 December 2014, the Group wishes to underscore that the Treaty's implementation should be done in a balanced and objective approach, to ensure that the interests of all States are protected and not just the major international producing and exporting States.

20. The full and balanced implementation of the ATT is practically achievable with the cooperation of all. The Group 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 African 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. The Group urges major arms suppliers to ratify the Treaty and upholds such ratification upon its entry into force.

21. The African Group seeks to raise the lingering question of autonomous weapons. The manufacture of Lethal Autonomous Weapon Systems (LAWS) is a threshold that raises ethical, legal, moral and technical issues in relation to

international humanitarian and international human rights laws. We commend the efforts of States Parties to the Convention on Certain Conventional Weapons (CCW) to broadly address this issue and urge Member States to remain seized with this matter.

22. 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. The Group continues 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 the same context, the Group also welcomes the successful convening of the Fifth Biennial Meeting of States (BMS 5) on UN PoA on SALWs in 2014 and congratulates the Chair of the Meeting, H. E. Ambassador Zahir Tanin of Afghanistan. In this regard, the Group continues to stress that international cooperation and assistance is essential to the full implementation of the Programme of Action.

23. Finally, Mr. Chairman, the African Group wishes to restate the critical 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 cause of peace.

24. The African Group will submit two resolutions at this 69<sup>th</sup> session. These are: **African Nuclear-Weapon-Free Zone Treaty and the United Nations Regional Centre for Peace and Disarmament in Africa**. We seek the full support of all delegations for these two resolutions.

I thank you for your attention.