



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**

**70<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, THURSDAY 8<sup>TH</sup> OCTOBER 2015.**

## **Mr. Chairman,**

1. I am honoured to speak on behalf of the African Group.
2. At the outset, let me congratulate you, Ambassador van Oosterom, on your election as the Chair of the First Committee for the 70<sup>th</sup> Session of the UN General Assembly. As you steer the course of this meeting, the Group believes that your experience will guide our debates, negotiations and decisions. The Group assures you of full cooperation as we deliberate on disarmament and peace and security issues. The Group also congratulates other members of the Bureau on their election and promises to work constructively with the entire team. The African Group commends your predecessor, H.E. Courtenay Rattray, for his leadership and laudable efforts.
3. The Group aligns itself with the Statement delivered on behalf of the Non-Aligned Movement by H.E. Mr. Abdurrahman Mohammed Fachir, the Vice Minister of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Indonesia.
4. The 69<sup>th</sup> Session of this Assembly witnessed renewed efforts to address a wide spectrum of disarmament and international security issues. Indeed, the Group notes major events such as the entry into force of the Arms Trade Treaty (ATT) and its First Conference of States Parties, the Second Open-ended Meeting of Governmental Experts (MGE2) under the Programme of Action to Prevent, Combat and Eradicate the Illicit Trade in Small Arms and Light Weapons and the 9<sup>th</sup> Review Conference of the States Parties to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT) among others. Similarly, a number of meetings discussed wide-ranging issues on cyberspace and outer space activities.
5. International security has been deteriorating and the world is facing immense peace and security challenges with threats of terrorism on the increase. It is in this regard, that 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.

## **Mr. Chairman,**

6. As the international community continues to await the realization of the goal

of the total elimination of nuclear weapons, the African Group seeks more profound and concrete measures in pursuit of the objective of nuclear disarmament. It is evident that the current approach has not been able to sufficiently deliver tangible outcomes that would ensure the realization of the overall goal and objectives of nuclear disarmament.

7. Seventy years after the use of atomic bombs in Hiroshima and Nagasaki, we must speak with unanimity towards ensuring a world free of nuclear weapons and all other weapons of mass destruction. We must also raise our voices against the slow pace of the nuclear weapon States to dismantle these weapons. In this context, the Group welcomes the second General Assembly Plenary Meeting in commemoration of the "International Day for the Total Elimination of Nuclear Weapons" and underscores the importance of resolution 69/58 as an integral part of the multilateral disarmament effort. The full implementation of this resolution, particularly through the commencement of negotiations in the CD for the conclusion of a comprehensive convention on nuclear weapons, will ensure that concrete progress is made towards the objective of eliminating these weapons.

8. For the African Group, the highest priority remains nuclear disarmament and to achieve the total elimination of nuclear weapons, which is the overall objective of the NPT. The Group regrets the inability of the 9<sup>th</sup> NPT Review Conference to command desired consensus on a final outcome document, despite the concerted efforts of non-nuclear weapon States; particularly from Africa. The Group continues to highlight the threat posed to humanity by the continued existence of nuclear weapon and insist on the implementation of all agreed measures and undertakings by the nuclear weapons States in the context of the Treaty. It is hoped that the setback of the review conference would serve as a stark reminder on the need to renew commitments to the overall objective of the Treaty. In this context, the Group reiterates its deep concern over the slow pace of progress towards nuclear disarmament and the lack of progress by the nuclear-weapon States to accomplish the total elimination of their nuclear arsenals, in accordance with their legal obligations and undertakings.

9. The African Group re-affirms the useful purposes of nuclear-weapon-free zones in the consolidation of the NPT, as well as their contributions to addressing nuclear disarmament and non-proliferation across all regions of the world. The Treaty of Pelindaba, Tlatelolco, Rarotonga, Bangkok, the Central Asian Nuclear-Weapon-Free Zone and Mongolia's Nuclear-Weapon-Free-Status significantly contribute to the overall objective of a world free of nuclear weapons. They enhance global and regional peace and security, strengthen the nuclear non-

proliferation regime and contribute towards realizing the objectives of nuclear disarmament.

10. The Group remains committed to the Treaty of Pelindaba, which entered into force on 15<sup>th</sup> July 2009. The Treaty 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 weapons among others.

11. In this regard, the African Group restates its deep concern at the fact that commitments and obligations of the 1995 resolution on the Middle East, including the Action Plan of the 2010 NPT Review Conference 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 as agreed. The Group is unequivocal in its disappointment of the inability to convene the agreed Conference on the establishment of the said zone in the Middle East, which should have held in 2012. The 1995 resolution remains an integral and essential part of the package and the basis upon which consensus was reached on the indefinite extension of the NPT in 1995. The Group wishes to highlight the validity of these commitments and obligations until their full implementation.

12. The Group underlines the importance of the peaceful uses of nuclear energy, and stressed the central role of the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) in this regard, by ensuring commitment of States to the implementation of Safeguards Agreements and in the provision of technical assistance and cooperation through maximizing the use of science and technology for socio-economic development.

13. The African Group reiterates its serious concern of the humanitarian consequences of nuclear weapons and continues to call on States, particularly the nuclear weapons States, to consider the catastrophic humanitarian consequences of the use of these weapons on human health, the environment and vital economic resources among others, and take necessary measures aimed at dismantling and renunciation of these weapons. **It is in this context that the Group strongly supports the call for banning Nuclear Weapons, the only WMD not prohibited by an international legal instrument.**

14. The continued existence and possession of nuclear weapons do not

guarantee security; but an affirmation of the risks of their potential 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 stresses the need for the nuclear weapons States to cease their further modernization, upgrading, refurbishment, or extending the lives of their nuclear weapons and related facilities.

### **Mr. Chairman,**

15. 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, thereby contributing to the goal of nuclear disarmament. The Group welcomes the convening of the 9<sup>th</sup> Ministerial Conference on Facilitating the Entry into Force of the CTBT on 29<sup>th</sup> September 2015 and commends the recent ratification of the Treaty by Angola. The Group supports the international community which has remained committed to promoting the CTBT, a treaty that could serve as threshold for promoting the process of nuclear disarmament and encourages the remaining Annex II countries, in particular, nuclear weapon States and those yet to accede to the NPT, to sign and ratify the CTBT.

### **Mr. Chairman,**

16. The African Group joins other Member-States to reaffirm the importance of the work entrusted to the Conference on Disarmament (CD). The Group expresses its concern at the 19<sup>th</sup> year of impasse that has prevented the CD from fulfilling its mandate as the world's single multilateral disarmament negotiating forum. The group calls on the CD to commence the nuclear disarmament negotiations without further delay. A reinvigorated CD should be supported to deliver on its objectives.

17. The Group expresses concern over the inability of the United Nations Disarmament Commission (UNDC) to reach consensus on the recommendations of its Agenda Items. It 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. The Group looks forward to a successful deliberation on the elements of the Agenda Items before the Commission in this cycle.

## **Mr. Chairman,**

18. The African Group acknowledges the entry into force of the Arms Trade Treaty (ATT) on 24 December 2014, as well as the successful Conference of its States Parties held in Cancun, Mexico. The Group urges appropriate implementation of the ATT, as the only legally binding instrument on the international transfer of conventional arms, in a balanced and objective manner that protects the interests of all States and not just the major international producing and exporting States. 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 full implementation of the treaty is practically achievable with the cooperation of all. The Group acknowledges that unregulated conventional arms transfer fuels the illicit trade. The Group further urges major arms suppliers to ratify the treaty and promote its implementation.

18. 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 remains committed to the UN Programme of Action to Prevent, Combat and Eradicate the Illicit Trade in Small Arms and Light Weapons (SALWs) in All Its Aspects. Having successfully concluded the Meeting of Governmental Experts (MGE) on the implementation of the UN PoA on SALW's early this year, the Group urge all States to continue to fulfil their obligations regarding reporting, technological transfer and by ensuring the unhindered flow of international cooperation and assistance as mandated by the UN PoA on small arms and light weapons.

19. Finally, Mr. Chairman, the African Group wishes to restate the critical importance of political will and transparency in addressing international disarmament and security issues. The Group believes 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.

20. The African Group will submit three resolutions in the course of our meetings for which we seek the 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 Prohibition of the Dumping of Radioactive Wastes.**

**I thank you for your attention.**