



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 Nigeria**

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**by**

**Ambassador Abel Ayoko**

**Undersecretary, Regions and International Organisation**

**Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Abuja, Nigeria**

**at**

**The General Debate of the First Committee Session**

**of the 71<sup>st</sup> United Nations General Assembly**

**New York, 6 October 2016**

**Mr. Chairman,**

The delegation of Nigeria joins others who have earlier spoken to congratulate you on your election as Chairman of this Session. We have no doubt that our work will benefit from your tremendous experience, expertise and commitment. We assure you of our full support and cooperation. Let me also commend your predecessor, Ambassador van Oosterom, for his leadership and admirable efforts. Nigeria aligns itself with the Statement of the Non-Aligned Movement and the African Group and wishes to make the following remarks.

**Mr. Chairman,**

My delegation joined other Member States at the 70<sup>th</sup> Session last year, to highlight the daunting challenges confronting our world. Sadly, little has changed to provide confidence and reduce the enormous challenges to global peace and security twelve months later. We are, in fact, faced with more challenges and quandaries, all of which justify the need for re-doubling of efforts and strident attention than witnessed only one year ago. In this regard, building the right multilateral environment involves more concerted efforts and a new plan for action to confront the challenges.

In the context of threats to International Peace and Security, my delegation will continue 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.

The dangers and effects of uncontrolled access to conventional weapons, including small arms and light weapons, are seen all around us. From Africa to the Middle East; across Europe to the Americas and Asia, the carnage has become unprecedented and bloodshed foisted on innocent population by mindless terrorists, insurgents and other gangs. We have seen cities and communities emptied, destroyed or deserted, including the heavy losses of precious lives, property, livelihood and forced mass migration. Sadly,

these mindless forms of aggression are largely enabled and effectively supported by illicitly purchased or transferred arms by non-state entities. These weapons are illicitly procured and indiscriminately used by terrorists and other bandits to unleash mayhem and unprecedented massacre of innocent civilians, including women and children. Member States bear the collective responsibility to exercise a deep sense of urgency in dealing with global insecurity and anarchy ravaging our world almost unabated.

**Mr. Chairman,**

The raison d'être for the overwhelming support and adoption of the landmark ATT resolution on 2 April 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. Today, and most sadly, these palpable threats to global peace and security appear not to be diminishing. We no longer think of the risks that terrorists might obtain and use these weapons on a large and devastating scale. This is because they already possess them, and effectively deploying them to optimum use.

In this regard, Nigeria welcomes the outcome of the Second Conference of States Parties to the ATT under the Presidency of Ambassador Imohe of Nigeria. We must do the needful, by standing with States Parties and other Signatories to this Treaty. Recent acts of terrorism activities and preponderance of insurgent groups across many regions of the world, including mine, have presented us with another unique opportunity to again take a second look at our positions, obligations and where we stand as nations.

**Mr. Chairman,**

While small arms and light weapons in the hands of criminal gangs, terrorists and other armed groups have continued to decimate lives indiscriminately, let no one be in doubt of the fact that, nuclear weapons remain the ultimate weapons of mass destruction and their

total elimination should be the final objective of all disarmament processes within the spectrum goals being pursued by the United Nations. We also restate our opposition to modernization of existing nuclear weapons and the development of new types. My delegation will continue to support the call to consider the humanitarian consequences of the detonation of nuclear weapons in all our deliberations, and for States with these weapons to take necessary measures to renounce and dismantle them.

If goodwill and common sense will not rid the world of these doomsday weapons, we believe enlightened self-interest should prevail on those possessing nuclear weapons to get rid of them. This is because they offer no credible defence against other enemies possessing similar weapons, and they pose an existential threat to those who do not possess them at all. It is in this context that my country fully supports the extensive work of the Open-Ended Working Group (OEWG) of the UN General Assembly on "Taking Forward Multilateral Nuclear Disarmament Negotiations" as a comprehensive arrangement provided for us to commence, as an opportunity in a lifetime, the process of convening a Conference in 2017 to commence negotiation on a treaty prohibiting nuclear weapons. This of course is without prejudice to other efforts put in place to address the challenges of nuclear disarmament and non-proliferation, including on the platform of NPT, FMCT and CTBT among others.

**Mr. Chairman,**

With regards to the Conference on Disarmament (CD), members are reminded of the need to reflect on whether the current impasse is serving the purposes and objective of its establishment. While some are of the opinion that some form of work had been done 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 hope that the Members of CD would hasten to do the needful and fulfill the objective for its establishment.

**Mr. Chairman,**

Notwithstanding the difficulties encountered in the multilateral disarmament machinery and the concern about the lack of progress on a number of issues, 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.

Nigeria 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 and the United Nations Regional Centre for Peace and Disarmament in Africa on behalf of the African Group and the United Nations disarmament fellowship, training and advisory services in our national capacity.**

**I thank you.**