



PERMANENT MISSION OF NIGERIA TO THE UNITED NATIONS

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**Statement by Nigeria**

**Delivered**

**By**

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**Undersecretary Regions & International Organizations**

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

**at**

**The Thematic debate of the First Committee:**

**Nuclear Weapons**

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

**New York, 17 October 2016**

**Mr. Chairman,**

Let me begin by expressing the appreciation of my delegation for your efforts and able leadership and to further assure you and the Bureau of our continued cooperation and support. The delegation of Nigeria aligns itself with the Statements delivered by the Non-Aligned Movement, the Group of African States and the Statement by the Non-Proliferation and Disarmament Initiative (NPT) on this cluster respectively.

On behalf of the African Group, the Nigerian delegation would like to introduce the draft resolution entitled: "African Nuclear-Weapon-Free Zone Treaty", also known as The Treaty of Pelindaba. This draft resolution has already been circulated to all Member States. We welcome the overwhelming support of delegations for this resolution in past sessions of the General Assembly and request the continued support of Member States in this regard. The presentation of the resolution again re-emphasizes Africa's strong commitment to maintaining the continent and adjoining areas as a zone truly free of nuclear weapons.

The Nigerian delegation considers nuclear weapon free zones as credible means of promoting the two-pronged approach of fulfilling the overall objective of nuclear disarmament and non-proliferation. The significance of such zones lies not just in the fact that they out rightly ban the production and possession of nuclear weapons within

the territory of the Member States in the region, but that; significantly, they also prohibit the stationing of such weapons within the zones. In this regard, my delegation wishes to stress that, notwithstanding noticeable setback on the establishment of Middle East zone free of nuclear weapons and all other weapons of mass destruction, efforts must continue to ensure that the commitments and obligations of the 2010 NPT Review Action Plan are honoured. We continue to call on all stakeholders and States within the region to work towards its success.

The monumental catastrophic humanitarian consequences that could result from either a deliberate use and/or unintentional explosion of nuclear weapons remain a compelling reason why some Member States should end the state of unnecessary denial of the existential threat faced by the human race and the urgent need to address the question of the continued possession of nuclear weapons. It is part of this compelling realization that enabled Nigeria to co-sponsor, in an open and transparent way, and along with our partners, Austria, Brazil, Ireland, Mexico and South Africa, the resolution to convene a conference in 2017, which will be open to all States, international organizations and civil societies among others, to negotiate a legally-binding instrument to prohibit nuclear weapons. In this regard, my delegation urges all States to support the extensive work of the Open-Ended Working Group (OEWG) of the UN General Assembly on "Taking Forward Multilateral Nuclear

Disarmament Negotiations" as a broad arrangement for us to commence this opportunity of a lifetime.

Nuclear weapons and their proliferation creates the challenge of security, especially within the context of the new realities such as threats of global and transboundary terrorism. My country continues to welcome the efforts of the Nuclear Security Summit to address the risk of nuclear materials falling into the hands of non-state actors, including those risks associated with the possible transfer of nuclear technology to terrorist groups, which remains a matter of great concern to my delegation. We welcome continued efforts by the IAEA, particularly its role in monitoring and inspecting nuclear facilities. To this end, my delegation welcomes the Second IAEA Ministerial Nuclear Security Conference scheduled for 5-6 December, 2016, the Preparatory Meeting of which is being co-Chaired by Nigeria and South Korea. We urge States to ensure observance and compliance with IAEA safeguards and standards at all times. States must equally be alive to responsibilities on compliance and adherence to other measures, including the Nuclear-Non Proliferation Treaty (NPT), the cornerstone for deepening the global non-proliferation regime and other machineries committed to promoting nuclear disarmament and non-proliferation, such as the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty (CTBT) and full commitments to the Conference on Disarmament by its Members. **I thank you**