STATEMENT

BY

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PERMANENT MISSION OF NIGERIA TO THE UN, NEW YORK

ON BEHALF OF THE AFRICAN GROUP

AT THE

GENERAL DEBATE OF THE FIRST COMMITTEE

OF THE

60TH SESSION OF THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY

NEW YORK, 4 OCTOBER 2005
Mr. Chairman,

On behalf of the African Group, I wish to congratulate you on your election as the Chairman of the First Committee of the 60th Session of the General Assembly. Through you, Mr. Chairman, the Group also wishes to convey its congratulations to the Bureau. The African Group has confidence in your ability to guide the affairs of this Committee to a successful conclusion. I assure you and the Bureau of the full support and cooperation of the African Group in addressing the task ahead.

Mr. Chairman,

The African Group wishes to reiterate its commitment to the achievement of general and effective disarmament under strict and effective international control. The Group believes in the need for the pursuit, and eventual attainment, of the goal of non-proliferation of weapons of mass destruction in all their aspects.

The Group welcomes the adoption of the Outcome Document at the High Level Summit in New York last month. The Group is, however, disappointed that no agreement could be reached on the Cluster dealing with the issue of disarmament and non-proliferation. The Group believes that further negotiations will necessary to make progress in this area. We call on all delegations to demonstrate the necessary political will to enhance progress in this area.

The African Group remains convinced that nuclear weapons pose the greatest danger to mankind. The commencement of multilateral negotiations leading to an early conclusion of a convention prohibiting the development, production, testing, deployment, stockpiling, transfer, threat or use of nuclear weapons and on their total elimination, has, therefore, become a necessity. Among the first steps towards the realization of this objective should be a commitment by nuclear-weapon States to immediately stop the qualitative improvement, development, production, and stockpiling of nuclear warheads and their delivery systems. Pending the total elimination of those weapons, a legally binding international instrument should be established under which the nuclear-weapon States will undertake not to use or threaten to use nuclear weapons against non-nuclear weapon States. The African Group stresses the importance of ensuring that any nuclear disarmament process is irreversible, transparent, and verifiable in order to be meaningful.

The African Group recognizes that the first special session of the General Assembly devoted to disarmament (SSOD-I) was a turning point in the history of multilateral efforts to achieve disarmament, in particular nuclear disarmament. The Group, once again, wishes to express its regret at the non-implementation of the Final Document of SSOD-I twenty-seven years after its
adoption. The African Group underscores the need for convening SSOD-IV in order to give real meaning to nuclear disarmament process.

The African Group reaffirms its belief in the Treaty on Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons as vital instrument in the maintenance of international peace and security. The Group endorses the 13 practical steps adopted by the 2000 NPT Review Conference for the systematic and progressive efforts to implement the unequivocal commitment undertaken by the nuclear-weapon States to accomplish the total elimination of their arsenals leading to nuclear disarmament in keeping with Article VI. The Group wishes to express its regret over the failure of the 2005 NPT Review Conference to produce a meaningful outcome.

The African Group reiterates its long-standing support for the total elimination of all nuclear testing. The Group stresses the significance of achieving universal adherence to the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty (CTBT), including by all nuclear weapon States, which, among others, should contribute to the process of nuclear disarmament. In this connection, the Group endorses the Declaration adopted at the Conference on Facilitating the Entry into Force of CTBT which took place in New York from 21 - 23 September. Pending the entry into force of the Treaty, it is important that the moratorium on nuclear-weapon-test explosions or explosions of any other nuclear device, be maintained. The Group welcomes the recent increase in the number of signatures and ratification of the Treaty.

I/r. Chairman,

The African Group emphasises the importance of strengthening the existing multilateral arms control and disarmament agreements by ensuring full compliance and effective implementation of those agreements as well as their universality.

The Group also re-affirms its strong belief in strengthening the existing disarmament machinery as a means of advancing the process of nuclear disarmament. In this connection, the Group expresses deep disappointment over the continued failure of the Conference on Disarmament to begin substantive work. The Group calls on the Conference on Disarmament to agree on a work programme as soon as possible so that substantive negotiations can start.

The African Group reiterates its support for the concept of internationally recognized nuclear-weapon-free zones established on the basis of arrangements freely arrived at among States in the regions concerned. The Group further endorses the Declaration adopted at the Conference of States Parties and Signatories to the Treaties that: Establish Nuclear-Weapon-Free Zones held in, Tlatelolco, Mexico from 26 to 28 April this year. We call for the
ratification of the Treaty of Pelindaba on African Nuclear-Weapon-Free Zone by the required number of States so that it can enter into force without further delay.

The African Group calls on States to take appropriate measures to prevent any dumping of nuclear or radioactive wastes that would infringe on sovereignty of States. In this regard, the Group recalls the 1991 resolution of OAU Council of Ministers on the Bamako Convention on the Ban on the Import of Hazardous Wastes into Africa and on the Control of Their Transboundary Movement within Africa. The Group also calls for the effective implementation of the IAEA Code of Practice on the International Transboundary Movement of Radioactive Wastes as a means of enhancing the protection of all States from dumping of radioactive wastes on their territories.

The African Group wishes to restate its belief, as also recognized in the Outcome Document, in the full implementation of the 2001 UN Programme of Action on Illicit Trade in SALW as a key element in promoting long-term security and for creating conditions for sustainable development in many developing countries especially those in Africa. The Group made a significant contribution to the agreement reached last June on the final text of an international instrument on tracing illicit small arms and light weapons, an instrument which will be presented for action during the course of this session of the General Assembly. Cognizant that arms brokering plays a significant role in illicit arms trade, the African Group calls for the establishment of an effective international regime on brokering. The Group expresses support for the establishment of a Group of Governmental Experts towards this end. To achieve the desired results, it is imperative that the international community should deal with the threat posed by illicit small arms trade in a comprehensive and action-oriented manner.

The African Group takes note of the First Review Conference of the Ottawa Convention on Anti-Personnel Mines that took place in Nairobi from 29 November to 3 December 2004, and in line with the Outcome Document, calls on States Parties to the Convention to fully implement their obligations under the instrument.

I thank you, Mr. Chairman.