STATEMENT

BY

AMBASSADOR SIMEON A. ADEKANYE
DEPUTY PERMANENT REPRESENTATIVE OF NIGERIA
TO THE UNITED NATIONS, NEW YORK

ON BEHALF OF THE NIGERIAN DELEGATION

AT THE

GENERAL DEBATE OF THE FIRST COMMITTEE

OF THE

60TH SESSION OF THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY

NEW YORK, 6 OCTOBER 2005
Mr. Chairman,

The Nigerian delegation offers warm congratulations to you on your election as Chairman of the First Committee for the 60th Session of the General Assembly. We are confident that you will provide the requisite leadership to steer our work to a successful conclusion. Let me also, through you, congratulate other members of the Bureau on their election. I wish to assure you of the cooperation of our delegation.

I also wish to thank the Under Secretary-General for Disarmament Affairs, Mr. Nobuyasu Abe, for his introductory statement which is very useful for our work.

Mr. Chairman,

This year has been marked, in large part, by a string of failures in the field of disarmament and arms control: the failure of Member States to agree on an agenda for the Disarmament Commission, the abysmal failure of the 2005 NPT Review Conference to produce a meaningful outcome, the lingering inability to agree to convene the Fourth Special Session of the General Assembly devoted to Disarmament, the perennial impasse in the Conference on Disarmament to begin substantive work, the continuing failure by the required category of States to ratify the CTBT to enable it to enter into force, and the ambivalence towards the negotiation of an FMCT, among other failures. It is, therefore, hardly surprising that this discouraging trend has impacted heavily on the resulting failure to agree on the Cluster on Disarmament and Non-proliferation in the Outcome Document.

The need to reverse this negative trend should be seen as one of the greatest challenges of the international community today as the continued existence and proliferation of all types of weapons, conventional as well as those of mass destruction, continue to pose serious threat to international peace and security. States that possess these weapons, especially nuclear and other weapons of mass destruction, can longer continue to pretend that their weapons pose no threat or less threat to the global community than those of other possessors.

There is growing concern about the risk to international peace and security that the prevailing stalemate in multilateral disarmament negotiations constitutes. Time has come for Member States to cease to interpret the existence of threats from nuclear or other types of weapons from their narrowly defined self-interests for we all know that progress cannot be achieved on disarmament under such rigidly entrenched national viewpoints. It is common knowledge that threats emanating from excessive accumulation of weapons of mass destruction are harbingers of spiraling arms race as we are
already witnessing in the world today. We have reached a stage where we must balance the call for non-proliferation with the need for effective disarmament.

In the face of the general stalemate in the field of arms control and disarmament, my delegation believes that time has come for demonstration of the necessary political will on the part all States in order to enhance progress in this area especially in confronting the common challenge of the continued existence and proliferation of nuclear and other arms across the globe. I will not fail to underscore the importance of confidence-building measures in assuaging the fears of States that may feel threatened by possession of mass destructive weapons by others. Security guarantees cast firmly in binding documents, remain, in our view, the best assurance that such States will not similarly acquire nuclear arms in presumption of self-defence.

On its part, Nigeria will continue to abide by its commitment under various disarmament and arms control agreements to which she a party. We will continue to work with other nations at multilateral and other levels in promoting disarmament and non-proliferation in all its aspects, towards achieving the overall objective of general and complete disarmament under strict and effective international control.

Mr. Chairman,

While taking note of the disappointing failures recorded this year in the area of disarmament, we will not fail to acknowledge some modest progress that has been made in the adoption of an international instrument on tracing illicit small arms and light weapons. We wish, however, to reiterate the Nigerian position that this should be considered as only a stopgap measure, for we believe that it is only through a legally binding international instrument that the transfer of small arms and light weapons to non-State actors can be controlled, and criminalized.

Similarly, the Nigerian delegation welcomes the initiative to convene the first Conference of States Parties and Signatories of Treaties that establish Nuclear-Weapon-Free Zones held in Mexico from 26 - 28 April 2005. We reaffirm our commitment to the Declaration adopted at that Conference and express the belief that it will enhance cooperation among the treaty zones and strengthen the nuclear-weapon-free zone regime thus contributing to disarmament and nuclear non-proliferation processes.

We also endorse the Declaration adopted at the Conference on Facilitating the Entry into Force of CTBT two weeks ago in New York. The increase in the number of signatures and ratifications of the Treaty to 176 and 125 respectively, demonstrates the resolve of the wider international community in achieving universalization of the Treaty. We, therefore, call upon the remaining 11 States whose ratification is mandatory for the Treaty to enter
into force to ratify the Treaty as early as possible so that it can enter into force without further delay.

Mr. Chairman,

This year, my delegation will, on behalf of the African Group, again sponsor, as it has done in the past, three draft resolutions entitled, ‘Regional Centre for Peace and Disarmament in Africa’, ‘Dumping of Radioactive Waste’, and ‘African Nuclear-Weapon-Free Zone Treaty’. We have always enjoyed the support of all Member States in adopting the three resolutions by consensus. It is the wish of the Nigerian delegation, that the three resolutions be similarly adopted when presented at this session. We look forward to such support from Member States.

I thank you.