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STATEMENT OF NIGERIA

BY

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AT THE

GENERAL DEBATE OF THE FIRST COMMITTEE

65 TH SESSION OF THE UNITED NATIONS GENERAL ASSEMBLY

5 TH OCTOBER, 2010
Mr. Chair,

On behalf of the Nigerian delegation, may I felicitate with you and members of the Bureau on your election. I assure you of Nigeria’s support and cooperation. We are confident that under your able leadership, we will have a successful deliberation. I equally, like to express appreciation to Ambassador Sergio Duarte, the High Representative for Disarmament, for his introductory statement. Nigeria associates herself with the statements delivered by Indonesia on behalf of the Non-Alignment Movement (NAM) and the African Group statement delivered by Nigeria.

2. This session of the First Committee is holding at a time when the international community is seized with the issue of global governance, regrettably, military expenditure has unfortunately and inexorably continued to escalate while developmental issues are not gaining the attention they deserve. The International Community cannot watch this development to continue unabated. Consequently the need to reverse this negative trend has become one of the greatest challenges to the International Community today.

3. The recent reawakening of the International Community on how best to address the issues of arms control and disarmament was amply demonstrated by the Summit on nuclear disarmament convened by the Security Council on 24th September, 2009.

Nigeria commends the efforts of the President of the 2010 NPT Review Conference, and observes that although imperfect, the aspects of “Conclusions and Recommendations for Follow-on actions” of the Conference represent an outcome that can serve, ultimately as a building block for the realization of a world free from nuclear weapons.

4. Nigeria takes note of the signing of the new Strategic Arms Reduction Treaty between the Russian Federation and the United States, in order to achieve further deep cuts in their strategic and tactical nuclear weapons. However, we observe that the recent measures are still insufficient and should be irreversible, verifiable and transparent, moving them towards fulfilling their nuclear disarmament obligations.

5. For this session our expectation is that the positive momentum generated so far on how to implement disarmament and non-proliferation measures, (which are increasingly becoming major challenges to the maintenance of International Peace and Security) should be pursued with renewed vigour. We therefore believe that we must collectively do all within our capacity to build on the recent positive gains achieved in the field of disarmament mechanisms in order to avert the failures that have characterized the disarmament agenda in the recent past so as to realize the shared international objectives concerning the dangers that weapons of mass destruction and conventional weapon pose to humanity.

Mr. Chairman,

6. My delegation wishes to reaffirm its belief in multilateralism as the core principle for addressing issues of disarmament and international security and will continue to abide by our commitments under the various disarmament and arms control agreements to which Nigeria is party. We are resolutely committed to collaborating with like-minded Member States in promoting disarmament and non-proliferation in all their aspects. It is our hope that such cooperation will lead to the achievement of the overall objective of general and complete disarmament under strict and effective international control. In this regard, we reaffirm that all
States parties, nuclear and non-nuclear-weapons alike, share a common obligation to ensure non-proliferation in all its aspects.

7. We maintain that the call for non-proliferation must be complemented by concrete action in the area of nuclear disarmament as this represents the most effective way of ensuring that such weapons do not fall into the hands of non-State actors. We therefore call on all States Parties to the CTBT to intensify their commitment toward the ratification of CTBT, in particular through adherence by the remaining Annex II States, whose ratification is also mandatory for the Treaty to enter into force. We also wish to reiterate that pending its entry into force; Nuclear Weapon States should continue to maintain the existing moratorium on nuclear-weapon test explosions or explosions of any other nuclear device.

8. The above notwithstanding, Nigeria believes that a moratorium is not, and cannot be a substitute for a treaty. CTBT is the ultimate goal. The Nigerian delegation will continue to maintain its position on the need to guarantee the inalienable rights of all States to develop, research, produce and use nuclear energy for peaceful purposes, in accordance with the NPT provisions.

9. Nigeria also wishes to reiterate 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.

Mr. Chairman,

10. My delegation reaffirms its commitment to the UN Programme of Action on Small Arms and Light Weapons (SALW). It is however, a matter of regret, that the West African Sub region has about 7 million illicit weapons in circulation. These Weapons are not only easily available; they can also be purchased cheaply. Women and children suffer disproportionately from the proliferation of small arms. The spread and misuse of these weapons cause, prolong, and exacerbate humanitarian crises around the world. Also, they have destabilized the continent, fuelled and prolonged conflicts and obstructed relief programmes. They have also undermined peace initiatives; increased human rights abuses; hampered development; and perhaps more worrysome, they have fostered a culture of organized crime and violence.

11. It is equally lamentable that in spite of efforts at various levels, the circulation of these weapons especially in the West African sub-region is fast turning the region into a major transit point for illicit trafficking in arms and drugs. These also facilitate the growth of criminal syndicates, some possessing sufficient fire-power to challenge a nation’s military force. This is why we continue to call on the international community, especially the major producers and exporters of arms, to demonstrate more serious commitment to the ongoing process of the Arms Trade Treaty.

12. Finally, Mr. Chairman, the Nigerian delegation will again this year sponsor, as it had done before the following two draft resolutions entitled:

- **African Nuclear-Weapon-Free Zone Treaty**

- **United Nations disarmament fellowship, training and advisory services**

13. We call on Member States to support these draft resolutions when presented as they have always done in the past.

14. I thank you, Mr. Chairman.