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STATEMENT
BY

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AT THE
THEMATIC DEBATE OF THE FIRST COMMITTEE ON
NUCLEAR WEAPONS AT THE 66TH UN GENERAL
ASSEMBLY

NEW YORK, FRIDAY 14 OCTOBER 2011.
Mr. Chairman,

Let me restate my delegation's confidence in your leadership and competence of your Bureau to guide this Committee to complete its work in a timely and efficient manner.

As this is the first time Nigeria is taking the floor to speak during the debate on nuclear weapons cluster, my delegation aligns with the De-alerting Group Statement, read by the distinguished Representative of Switzerland on behalf of Chile, New Zealand, Nigeria, Switzerland and Malaysia on decreasing the operational readiness of nuclear weapons.

Mr. Chairman,

May I also take this opportunity to introduce the draft resolution entitled "African Nuclear-Weapon-Free Zone Treaty", which has already been circulated to colleagues and delegates, on behalf of the States Members of the United Nations that are members of the Group of African States. We welcome the overwhelming support for this resolution in the past and with respect to ensuring its effectiveness, we appeal to nuclear-weapon States that have not yet ratified the relevant annexes to the Treaty to do so without further delay.

The opening words of the Charter of the United Nations in 1945 declare the objective of this noble Organization thus: "to save succeeding generations from the scourge of war". We accept that the term "scourge of war" addresses
all acts of wars and conflicts fought with deadly weapons, but consider nuclear weapons as the most deadly of all arms and an unacceptable means of prosecuting wars and defence of States.

This aspect of the danger of nuclear weapons is well reflected in the advisory opinion of the International Court of Justice (ICJ) in 1996, when the jurists described, in clear terms, that nuclear weapons possess certain unique characteristics which make them dangerous to world security. Nuclear weapons are identified as explosive devices with energy purposely set to inflict extreme pain and cause maximum destruction. They are, by their very nature, the most inhumane weapons ever conceived and intended to be used most indiscriminately to kill, maim and destroy. My delegation views their continued existence as robust invitation for other Member States to crave for and earmark resources for their acquisition.

Mr. Chairman,

Nigeria considers obligations of State Parties to the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty (NPT) and respect for the three-pillar system contained in its preamble and eleven articles as sacrosanct. Nigeria believes that a broader compliance with the tenor of the treaty would serve useful purpose in addressing all the challenges associated with nuclear disarmament, including clandestine development of its broad systems and the craving associated with its acquisition and ownership. We believe that States Parties should also demonstrate practical
commitment to Article IV of the NPT. We welcome the basic philosophy in NPT which emphasizes that nuclear weapons States commit themselves to nuclear disarmament while non-nuclear weapons States adhere to the principle of non-acquisition of nuclear weapons.

My delegation also calls on State Parties to work towards Nuclear Disarmament and submit their nuclear facilities and programmes to the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) Safeguard Inspections. In addition, Nigeria believes that the fear of nuclear confrontation among the Nuclear Weapon States, including the reluctance to halt horizontal and vertical development of weapons, lack of commitment and political will to dismantle their nuclear arsenals in line with Articles I and III of the NPT, is of major concern to the International Community. It is for this reason that my delegation intends to use this opportunity to reiterate the concerns of the de-alerting Group as earlier presented by Switzerland.

Nigeria also welcomes the discussion of the issue of de-alerting of nuclear weapons during last year's NPT Review Conference and calls for the continued commitment of nuclear weapons States for further reduction of operational status of nuclear weapons systems. We believe in the usefulness of the Comprehensive Test Ban Treaty (CTBT) in the overall process of nuclear disarmament and calls for the removal of all impediments which continue to stall its entry into force after fifteen years. We therefore call on States yet to ratify the
CTBT—in particular the remaining Annex II States—to do so without further delay.

Mr. Chairman,

As a State Party to the NPT, Nigeria will continue to promote a multilateral process and join other Member States, including NAM and the African Group in expressing support for the NPT as the cornerstone of the global non-proliferation regime. The next Review Conference is three years away, but we could assist the agenda of the Conference by demonstrating commitment to address the process transparently. We therefore support all useful International efforts toward achieving nuclear disarmament, including the best intentions of the General Assembly to advance the cause of nuclear disarmament.

I thank you.