Statement by

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Of Nigeria

At the

First Session of the Preparatory Committee for the 2005 Review Conference of the States Parties to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons

New York, 9 April, 2002
Mr. Chairman,

I am pleased to congratulate you on your deserved election as Chairman of this first meeting of the Preparatory Committee for the 2005 NPT Review Conference. I wish to assure you of the full cooperation and support of the Nigerian delegation as you guide the proceedings of this important session of the PrepCom which marks the beginning of the new NPT review cycle.

2. Let me, at the outset, associate Nigeria with the statement delivered yesterday on behalf of the Movement of Non-Aligned Countries (NAM) by the Permanent Representative of Indonesia. That statement highlighted, in clear and concise manner, the pressing issues to which States Parties to the NPT must avert their minds and deploy their sincere energies in tackling if the objectives of the Treaty are to be fully and expeditiously realized.

3. The challenge before us at the start of this preparatory process is to ensure that we lay the groundwork and basis for a successful Review Conference in 2005. We must engage in an assessment of the implementation of the important decisions that States Parties to the NPT took both in 1995 and 2000. While, as we all acknowledge, the NPT continues to be the cornerstone of global nuclear disarmament and non-proliferation regime, a preliminary analysis shows that very little has been done to give practical credence to these commitments since 2000. In fact, it is particularly disturbing that on the key NPT goal of nuclear disarmament this appears to be the situation.
Mr. Chairman,

4. When the NPT was extended indefinitely in 1995 it was hoped that that bold action would be the spur to accelerated and concrete action on nuclear disarmament. Nigeria had warned at the 2000 Review Conference that it would be a mistaken view to equate the indefinite extension of the NPT with the indefinite extension of the possession of these weapons of mass destruction by the nuclear weapon states. Regrettably, this is the unfortunate reality as we are witnessing the evolution of new strategic and defence doctrines that place reliance on nuclear weapons for security. My delegation views such developments with profound concern as they totally undermine the good faith undertaking to work for the total elimination of nuclear weapons by the nuclear weapon states. In this regard we view with dismay the failure of the Conference on Disarmament (CD), the single global negotiating forum on this vital issue, to even agree an agenda, much less engage in any negotiations in the last four years or more. Yet the CD has a very critical role in the implementation of the decisions contained in the Final Document of the 2000 Review Conference. This failure is a source of concern not only to Nigeria but, I am sure, to all countries who genuinely seek the elimination of nuclear weapons which are a threat to world peace. We therefore reiterate the call for the convening of the Fourth Special Session of the UN General Assembly to be devoted to Disarmament.

5. Nigeria believes that the CTBT is vital to our collective efforts at advancing nuclear disarmament and non-proliferation. As an earnest of her commitment to this objective Nigeria has since ratified the Treaty and we
note the progress being made to put in place its International Monitoring System (IMS) to verify compliance with the Treaty. Yet, at the same time, we state, with regret, that the CTBT which was adopted in 1996 has yet to enter into force even though 165 countries have signed and 90 have ratified it. This unnecessary delay has been caused by the failure, so far, to secure the required number of ratifications by designated states. Clearly, we must bring urgency to the efforts to make the CTBT fully operational.

Mr. Chairman,

6. While there has been remarkable progress with respect to non-proliferation, Nigeria wishes to underscore the necessity and urgency of achieving the universality of the NPT, especially by the accession to it, at the earliest date, of the four countries presently outside the Treaty. At the 2000 Review Conference Nigeria had proposed the setting up of the NPT Management Board which, among other functions, will serve as a consultative mechanism for engaging these states yet to accede to the Treaty. My delegation reiterates the manifest necessity of such a mechanism.

7. Nigeria continues to support the establishment of Nuclear Weapon Free Zones (NWFZs). My country has already ratified the Pelindaba Treaty which established the African Nuclear Free Zone. We note with satisfaction that a number of nuclear weapon states have ratified the Treaty and we urge all states yet to ratify it to do so at an early date to speedily enable it come into force. It is evident from the establishment of nuclear-weapon free zones created by the Pelindaba, Rarotonga, Bangkok and
Tlatelolco Treaties that the non-nuclear weapon states are fulfilling their obligations under the NPT. My delegation therefore affirms the need and urgency for the establishment of a nuclear weapon free zone in the Middle East in accordance with all General Assembly and Security Council Resolutions.

Mr. Chairman,

8. Nigeria attaches utmost importance to the NPT. My delegation therefore urges that we leave no stone unturned beginning from this very first meeting of the preparatory committee to ensure that the 2005 Review Conference fulfills our expectations. The PrepCom, in light of the decisions taken in 1995 and 2000, must deal with both procedural and substantive issues connected with the 2005 Review Conference. For instance we need to look at ways and means of improving the functioning of the review process so that instead of merely adopting decisions on procedure it can accomplish the purposes of the NPT. We must focus attention on what can be done to bolster and not weaken the Treaty.

9. My delegation, among other things, is of the view that the issue of nuclear disarmament must be thoroughly deliberated in the course of this preparatory process to the 2005 NPT Review Conference. We believe that this process, as some delegations have already implied, will be a test of the willingness of States Parties to the NPT to live up to their commitments and agreements, especially those freely made in 1995 and 2000.

10. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.