Nigeria Country Statement at the
General Debate of the First Preparatory Committee Meeting (PREPCOM) of the 2020 Review Conference of the Parties to the
Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons
Vienna, 2\textsuperscript{nd} May 2017.

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Mr Chairperson,

Excellencies,

Distinguished Delegates,

Ambassador Van der Kwast, the delegation of Nigeria congratulates you on your election as Chairman of this first PREPCOM of the 2020 Review Conference of the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty. We are confident of your commitment to this process and remain hopeful that the conference would engender progress and clear direction under your able leadership. We assure you of our full cooperation and constructive engagement in the course of debates and negotiations.

2. We align ourselves with the Statements delivered on behalf of the Non-Aligned Movement (NAM), the Non-Proliferation and Disarmament Initiative (NPDI) and the Group of 156 Countries on the Humanitarian Consequences of nuclear weapons respectively.

3. This Conference provides a unique opportunity to review steps taken since 2010, the last time this process had a successful outcome. At the same time, this first PREPCOM also offers a platform to restate our commitments to the exceptional role of the NPT as pivotal to our collective resolve to banish
nuclear weapons from arsenals of States, prevent their proliferation and assess
the impact of harnessing nuclear energy for peaceful purposes and human
progress, through cooperation, and in line with its Articles IV. Coming on the
heels of the failure of the 2015 Review Conference to achieve an outcome, this
Conference is therefore even the more important for the pursuit of our common
goals as enshrined in the treaty.

Mr. Chair,

4. My delegation hopes that this first PREPCOM under your leadership
should further assist us to evaluate the progress made in the implementation of
undertakings by States Parties, while offering fresh perspectives and
identifying further measures that could strengthen the implementation of the
Treaty. My delegation restates that the objectives of the NPT require us to
eliminate nuclear weapons, while harnessing nuclear technology for peaceful
purposes.

5. Need I underscore that nuclear technology remains benign, beneficial
and productive to mankind, until such knowledge is adopted for purposes other
than peaceful uses. This was one of the noble considerations when the treaty
entered into force forty-five years ago - that nuclear technology ceases to be
manipulated and converted into manufacturing weapons of mass destruction.
And our hope when we signed unto the treaty was that all the pillars especially
disarmament would be pursued and achieved in a speedy manner.

6. In demonstration of our commitment to the NPT, our nuclear
programme has remained and will remain for peaceful uses only. It is in
furtherance to this that Nigeria has subscribed to the Safeguard Agreement
with the IAEA, ratified the Model Additional Protocol as well as the African Nuclear Weapons Free Zone also known as the Treaty of Pelindaba.

Mr. Chairperson,

7. My delegation is of the view that this PREPCOM should focus equally on all three pillars and any ancillary issues thenceforth. In this context, Nigeria notes that progress on the Disarmament pillar has been less than desirable. We are hopeful that this PREPCOM would begin to outline the broad framework that will lead to complete and total disarmament while also strengthening the mechanisms for international cooperation in the peaceful uses of atomic energy.

8. My delegation is aware that this PREPCOM is sandwiched between two negotiation rounds in New York on a Treaty to ban Nuclear Weapons. Nigeria fully supports that process; however, we hasten to add that from our point of view, that process is not an attempt to undermine the NPT. Rather, Nigeria sees the process as complimentary and in furtherance to the disarmament plank of the NPT.

Mr. Chair,

9. Nuclear weapons create an obscure system that characterizes a situation of fear, suspicion and mistrust, unhealthy rivalry as well as unnecessary competition amongst States. The way out is complete and total disarmament.

10. Let me also emphasize that while nuclear disarmament and non-proliferation remain mutually reinforcing, it is an unmistakable fact that
complete and total nuclear disarmament remains the only effective path to non-proliferation.

11. Another possible scenario that deserves all of our attention is the threat of violent non-state actors. My delegation is of the view that the incessant delay in ratifying treaties of disarmament, and maintaining nuclear weapons capabilities and technology is bound to not only hamper confidence building amongst States, but also give terrorist elements the opportunity for possible access to nuclear material and technology, the result of which will be catastrophic. We are witnesses to the havoc these elements have created with the use of arms of a lesser magnitude so there is no telling what a situation of their nuclear capability will spell. Incidences of trafficking in nuclear materials and the threat and likelihood of nuclear terrorism are a reality we must all combat and overcome. My delegation is glad to recall that Nigeria co-chaired alongside the Republic of Korea, the open ended working group that prepared the Declaration adopted by consensus at the 2nd International Conference on Nuclear Security in December 2016.

12. My delegation supports the growing focus on the humanitarian consequences of the use of nuclear weapons, an element firmly anchored in the NPT, and reflected in the 2010 final document. We welcome the convening of the three meetings in Oslo, Nayarit and Vienna and continue to endorse the pledge issued at the Vienna Conference on the humanitarian impact of Nuclear Weapons. Notwithstanding the ongoing efforts to address nuclear disarmament, Nigeria welcomes additional diplomatic process to negotiate a legally binding instrument to prohibit nuclear weapons.
13. The implementation of the Action Plan, consensually adopted at the 2010 Review Conference, remains a good basis for our deliberations. As a confidence-building measure, expectations should neither be lowered nor diminished, as we remain committed to implementing the Action Plan, and avoid altering agreed terms. The objective is to fully comply with the obligations and commitments, particularly with the full and prompt implementation of all the actions in the 2010 NPT. The support of nuclear weapon States becomes crucial in this regard and this becomes more urgent as NPT appears confronted by serious challenges, not the least, by the non-implementation of a substantial number of actions that are central to the Treaty.

Mr. Chairperson,

14. My delegation notes the gesture by nuclear weapons States to reduce the stockpile of these inhumane weapons. Our expectation as a State Party; however, remains the total elimination of nuclear arsenals by States that posses these weapons, to fulfill, in good faith, their legal obligations as highlighted in Article VI of the Treaty. In the final analysis, it is the demonstration of their full commitment to the principle of nuclear disarmament that can truly lead to actualization of the objectives of the NPT. In the same context, my delegation sees as neither moral nor acceptable the reason for other States not party to this Treaty, to continue to threaten the peace of the world by developing, testing and adamantly defending their justification to possess these weapons of mass destruction.
15. Nuclear weapon-free zones play an important role in preventing the proliferation of nuclear weapons as a veritable step towards the total elimination of nuclear weapons and ensuring the denuclearization of all regions. The Treaty of Pelindaba continues to consolidate on the objectives of its establishment. The African Commission on Nuclear Energy (AFCONE), a mechanism established for measuring compliance with undertakings of disarmament, non-proliferation and peaceful uses, has continued to play vital role towards attaining the objective of nuclear disarmament and non-proliferation since its establishment in 2010.

16. As my delegation continues to promote the Pelindaba Treaty, Nigeria fully supports the establishment of such free zones across all regions, including in the Middle East. In this regard, my delegation reiterates its call for holding the agreed conference on the establishment of a zone free of nuclear weapons and all other weapons of mass destruction in the region as the minimum starting point. We encourage all the parties involved to summon the requisite courage to embrace the path of constructive and sincere engagement in this regard.

17. It also imperative to state that while Nigeria remains a proponent of a nuclear weapons free world, it is of the firm view that Non-nuclear weapons states must be assured against the threat or impact of deployment of such weapons under a legally binding framework. In other words, we favor a regime of negative security assurances. In addition, we remain hopeful that the moratorium on nuclear testing should be maintained as it is crucial to preserving the mutual trust necessary to safeguard existing assurances.

Mr Chairperson,

18. Nigeria supports the protection of the inalienable rights of all State Parties to the Treaty to use of nuclear energy for peaceful purposes. My delegation is aware of the inherent capability of Atomic energy to accelerate
the developmental aspirations of many parts of the world and we continue to strengthen our competence to better utilize it for our goals including in power generation, human health, agriculture and other priority areas. In this context, we highlight specially, the benefits we have derived from the IAEA's Technical Cooperation Programme.

19. While we continue to promote the rights of states to pursue peaceful uses of nuclear energy, we are also aware of the corresponding responsibility of States to secure materials within their territory, an important principle already enshrined in article 10 of the Pelindaba Treaty.

20. Furthermore we welcome the entry into force of the amendment of the Convention on Physical Protection of Nuclear Materials which we have since ratified—as we have,—the International Convention for the Suppression of Acts of Nuclear Terrorism (ICSANT). Ultimately, no nation is safe, in the event of an act of nuclear terrorism. In this regard, my delegation calls on States that are not party to NPT, to join the Treaty, without precondition; and to place promptly, all existing nuclear facilities under IAEA full-scope safeguards, in conformity with the non-proliferation regime.

21. The many benefits of nuclear disarmament are never in doubt and States Parties, and indeed all Member States of the United Nations, must concretely demonstrate sincerity of purpose and commitment to the goal of nuclear weapons disarmament. Nigeria will continue to meet its obligations under the Treaty and my delegation promises to be constructively engaged in the course of this conference.

I thank you.