



PERMANENT MISSION OF NIGERIA TO THE UNITED NATIONS

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**STATEMENT**

**BY**

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MINISTER**

*PERMANENT MISSION OF NIGERIA TO THE UN, NEW YORK*

**ON BEHALF OF THE AFRICAN GROUP**

**AT THE**

**GENERAL DEBATE**

**OF THE**

**FIRST COMMITTEE OF THE 61<sup>ST</sup> GENERAL ASSEMBLY**

**NEW YORK, 3 OCTOBER 2006**

Madam Chairperson,

On behalf of the African Group, I wish to congratulate you on your election as the Chairperson of the First Committee of the 61<sup>st</sup> Session of the General Assembly. Through you, Madam Chairperson, the Group also wishes to convey its congratulations to the Bureau. The African Group has confidence in your ability to guide the affairs of this Committee to a successful conclusion. I assure you and the Bureau of the full support and cooperation of the African Group in addressing the task ahead.

Madam Chairperson,

The African Group wishes to reiterate its commitment to the achievement of general and effective disarmament under strict and effective international control. The Group believes in the need for the pursuit, and eventual attainment, of the goal of non-proliferation of weapons of mass destruction in all their aspects.

The African Group remains convinced that nuclear weapons pose the greatest danger to mankind. The commencement of multilateral negotiations leading to an early conclusion of a convention prohibiting the development, production, testing, deployment, stockpiling, transfer, threat or use of nuclear weapons and on their total elimination, has, therefore, become a necessity. Among the first steps towards the realization of this objective should be a commitment by nuclear-weapon States to immediately stop the qualitative improvement, development, production, and stockpiling of nuclear warheads and their delivery systems. Pending the total elimination of those weapons, a legally binding international instrument should be established under which the nuclear-weapon States will undertake not to use or threaten to use nuclear weapons against non-nuclear weapon States. As an important confidence-building measure, such an instrument will no doubt help reduce current international political tension in certain parts of the world particularly those of major global concern. The African Group stresses the importance of ensuring that any nuclear disarmament process is irreversible, transparent, and verifiable in order to be meaningful.

The African Group recognizes that the first special session of the General Assembly devoted to disarmament (SSOD-I) was a turning point in the history of multilateral efforts to achieve disarmament, in particular nuclear disarmament. The Group, once again, wishes to express its regret at the non-implementation of the Final Document of SSOD-I twenty-eight years after its adoption. The African Group underscores the need for convening SSOD-IV in order to give real meaning to nuclear disarmament process.

The African Group reaffirms its belief in the Treaty on Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons as a vital instrument in the maintenance of international

peace and security. The Group endorses the 13 practical steps adopted by the 2000 NPT Review Conference for the systematic and progressive efforts to implement the unequivocal commitment undertaken by the nuclear-weapon States to accomplish the total elimination of their arsenals leading to nuclear disarmament in keeping with Article VI. In this regard, the Group continues to express regret over the failure of the 2005 NPT Review Conference to produce a meaningful outcome.

The African Group reiterates its long-standing support for the total elimination of all nuclear testing. The Group stresses the significance of achieving universal adherence to the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty (CTBT), including by all nuclear weapon States, which, among others, should contribute to the process of nuclear disarmament. In this connection, the Group endorses the Joint Ministerial Declaration on CTBT adopted in New York on 20 September. Pending the entry into force of the Treaty, it is important that the moratorium on nuclear-weapon-test explosions or explosions of any other nuclear device, be maintained.

Madam Chairperson,

The African Group emphasises the importance of strengthening the existing multilateral arms control and disarmament agreements by ensuring full compliance and effective implementation of those agreements as well as their universality.

The Group also reaffirms its strong belief in strengthening the existing disarmament machinery as a means of advancing the process of nuclear disarmament. In this connection, the Group expresses deep disappointment over the continued failure of the Conference on Disarmament to begin substantive work. The Group calls on the Conference on Disarmament to agree on a work programme as soon as possible so that substantive negotiations can start.

The African Group reiterates 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. In this regard, we welcome the signing of the Treaty on nuclear-weapon-free zone by five Central Asian States on 8 September 2006. The Group recalls the decision of the 8<sup>th</sup> Ordinary Session of the Executive Council of the African Union which took place in Khartoum from 16 to 21 January 2006 in which it called on States that have not signed or ratified the Treaty of Pelindaba on African Nuclear-Weapon-Free Zone or its Protocols that concern them, to do so to enable the Treaty enter into force without further delay. We urge the affected States to implement, or comply as applicable, with the decision of the Council as early as possible.

The African Group calls on States to take appropriate measures to prevent any dumping of nuclear or radioactive wastes that would infringe on sovereignty of States. In this regard, the Group recalls the 1991 resolution of OAU Council of Ministers on the Bamako Convention on the Ban on the Import of Hazardous Wastes into Africa and on the Control of Their Trans-boundary Movement within Africa. The Group also calls for the effective implementation of the IAEA Code of Practice on the International Trans-boundary Movement of Radioactive Wastes as a means of enhancing the protection of all States from dumping of radioactive wastes on their territories.

The African Group wishes to reiterate its belief, as also recognized in the 2005 World Summit Outcome Document, in the full implementation of the 2001 UN Programme of Action on Illicit Trade in SALW as a key element in promoting long-term security and for creating conditions for sustainable development in many developing countries especially those in Africa. To achieve the desired results, it is imperative that the international community should deal with the threat posed by illicit small arms trade in a comprehensive and action-oriented manner. In this connection, the Group regrets the failure of the first Review Conference on the UNPoA to agree on a final document. Considering the importance of this issue, we call on Member States to find a solution to this impasse. Finally, the African Group continues to support the establishment of a Group of Governmental Experts on brokering considering that arms brokering plays a significant role in illicit arms trade.

I thank you, Madam Chairperson.