



PERMANENT MISSION OF NIGERIA TO THE UNITED NATIONS

828 SECOND AVENUE • NEW YORK, N.Y. 10017 • TEL. (212) 953-9130 • FAX (212) 697-1970

(PLEASE CHECK AGAINST DELIVERY)

STATEMENT

BY

**BUKUN-OLU ONEMOLA
AMBASSADOR/DEPUTY PERMANENT
REPRESENTATIVE**

AT THE

**GENERAL DEBATE OF THE FIRST COMMITTEE
64TH SESSION OF THE UNITED NATIONS
GENERAL ASSEMBLY**

NEW YORK, October 6, 2009.

On behalf of the Nigerian delegation, let me congratulate you and members of the Bureau on your election. I assure you of our support and cooperation. We are confident that under your able leadership, we will have a successful deliberation. I also thank the High Representative for Disarmament, Ambassador Sergio Duarte for his introductory statement. Nigeria associates itself with the statements delivered on behalf of the Non-Alignment Movement (NAM) and the African Group.

2. This session of the First Committee is holding at a time of great concern due to the global economic and financial crisis as well as the risk posed to international peace and security caused by the prevailing stalemate in multilateral negotiations. It is therefore no surprise that while resources for aid and development assistance continue to plummet, military expenditure continues to escalate. World military expenditure which stood at \$780 billion at the beginning of this decade has now risen to \$1.464 trillion, a 4% increase in real terms since 2007 and represents a 45% increase since 1999. This figure also corresponds to 2.4% of world gross domestic product or US\$217 for each person on earth in a world where some people live on less than one dollar a day. On the other hand, less than one percent of what the world spends every year on weapons is required to put every child into school by the year 2000. Yet this did not happen. 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 above notwithstanding, 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.

4. 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 must therefore do all within our means to avert the failures that have characterized the disarmament agenda in the last couple of years so as to realize the shared international concerns about the dangers that weapons of mass destruction and conventional weapon pose to mankind.

Mr. Chairman,

5. 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 will work with other nations 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. Nigeria also reaffirms that all States parties, nuclear and non-nuclear-Weapon alike, share a common obligation to ensure non-proliferation in all its aspects. We maintain that the call for non-proliferation must be complemented by concrete action in the area of nuclear disarmament as the most effective way of ensuring that such weapons do not fall into the hands of non-State actors. It is in this regard that all member states should 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. 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. However, Nigeria believes that a moratorium cannot replace 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.

6. 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. Africa has again demonstrated her commitment to the principle of universal denuclearisation with the recent entry into force of the African Nuclear-Weapon Free Zone Treaty called the Pelindaba Treaty.

Mr. Chairman,

7. My delegation reaffirms its commitment to the UN Programme of Action on Small Arms and Light Weapons (SALW). We however wish to underline 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 to demonstrate commitment to check this menace by implementing existing initiatives, as well as develop new and legally-binding ones, where necessary. These instruments should be geared toward achieving the goal of preventing, combating and eradicating illicit trade in small arms and light weapons, and regulating the transfer of conventional weapons in general. The full implementation of the United Nations Programme of Action on Small and Light Weapons would be a very good beginning. In this connection we hope that the next meeting of the Open-ended Working Group will make a more substantial progress.

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

- ❖ African Nuclear Weapon Free Zone,
- ❖ Prohibition of dumping Nuclear Waste
- ❖ and United Nations Centre for Peace and Disarmament in Africa".

9. We appreciate the support of Member States that have continued to provide resources and facilities for participants in the programme. We are equally grateful to the Secretary-General for the able manner in which he has implemented them over the years. We call on Member States to support these draft resolutions when presented as they had always done in the past.

9. I thank you, Mr. Chairman.