



S U D A N

PERMANENT MISSION TO THE UNITED NATIONS

305 East 47th Street • New York, N.Y. 10017 • Tel: (212) 573-6033 • Fax: (212) 573-E160



**STATEMENT OF THE AFRICAN GROUP
AT THE 2007 SESSION OF THE UNITED
NATIONS DISARMAMENT COMMISSION
(UNDC)**

**H.E Dr. ABDALMAHMOOD ABDALHALEEM
MOHAMMED**

**PERMANENT REPRESENTATIVE OF THE SUDAN
CHIRMAN OF THE AFRICAN GROUP**

Tuesday April – 10 - 2007

**STATEMENT BY THE AFRICAN GROUP AT THE 2007 SESSION OF
THE UNITED NATIONS DISARMAMENT COMMISSION (UNDC)**

The African Group joins previous speakers in congratulating you, on your election as the Chairman of the 2006 session of the Disarmament Commission. We would like to convey similar sentiment to other members of the Bureau. We are confident that under your able guidance and leadership, this session of the Commission will come out with fruitful outcomes. Let me add that we assure you of the full support and cooperation of the African Group.

The Group extends its appreciation to the chairmen of Working Groups I and II for their respective papers, which we believe could serve as a basis for substantive discussions on both agenda items.

The African Group welcomes the Secretary-General to this session of the UNDC and supports the reorganization of the Department of Disarmament Affairs by the creation of the office of Disarmament Affairs to be headed by a High Representative. We hope that this will raise the profile of the Department.

The African Group wishes to express appreciation to the Department of Disarmament Affairs (DDA) for its continued service to Member States, in promoting the cause of global disarmament.

The African Group aligns itself with the statement made by the Ambassador of Indonesia on behalf of the Non-Aligned Movement (NAM) and would like to reiterate the following:

The African Group stresses the importance of the Disarmament Commission as a deliberative body that examines and discusses specific issues in the field of disarmament and makes recommendations to the General Assembly. Based on this, the Group considers the current session of the Commission very relevant in terms of the overall objective of general and complete disarmament under effective international control. The Group therefore expects useful recommendations to emerge from this session.

The African Group reaffirms its absolute commitment to multilateral diplomacy and its strong belief in the promotion of multilateralism in the field of disarmament as an essential way to strengthen universal peace and security and the pursuit of our common interests in this area. The Group joins other Member States of the Non-Aligned Movement in expressing its deep concern at the growing resort to unilateralism in addressing issues of multilateral interest.

The African Group remains convinced that nuclear weapons pose great threat to international peace and security and that the most effective means of achieving nuclear disarmament should be the commencement of multilateral negotiations leading to an early conclusion of a convention prohibiting the development, production, testing, deployment, stockpiling, transfer, threat to use or use of nuclear weapons, their means of delivery and related materials. 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 stocking of nuclear warheads and their delivery systems. Pending the total elimination of those nuclear weapons, a legally binding international instrument should be established under which the nuclear-weapon States would undertake not to be the first to use nuclear weapons and not to use, or threaten to use, nuclear weapons against non-nuclear-weapon States. The African Group stresses the importance of ensuring that any meaningful nuclear-weapon disarmament process should be irreversible, transparent and verifiable.

The African Group recognizes that the tenth special session of the General Assembly—the first special session devoted to disarmament—was a turning point in the history of multilateral efforts to achieve disarmament, in particular nuclear disarmament. The Group however, regrets the non-implementation of the Final Document of the Tenth Special Session, 29 years after its adoption.

The African Group notes the importance of the Conference on Disarmament as the only multilateral negotiating forum on disarmament. It is, however, a matter of deep concern that over the years there has been lack of progress in this multilateral body, particularly its inability to agree on its programme of work. The Group regrets the continued failure of the Conference on Disarmament to establish an ad hoc committee on nuclear disarmament and stresses the need to start negotiations on the complete elimination of nuclear weapons within a specified time-frame, leading to a nuclear weapons convention. We are however encouraged with the recent development in the conference which we hope will lead to sustained progress on the issues before it.

The African Group reaffirms its belief in the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT) as a vital instrument in the maintenance of international peace and security. While regretting the outcome of the 2005 NPT Review Conference, the Group however endorses the measures adopted by the 1995 and 2000 Review Conferences. In particular, the 13 practical steps adopted by the 2000 NPT Review Conference for systematic and progressive efforts to implement article VI of NPT, including the unequivocal undertaking by the nuclear-weapon States to accomplish the total elimination of their nuclear arsenals, leading to nuclear disarmament, to which all States parties are committed under article VI.

The African Group recalls the solemn declaration of the Organization of African Unity (OAU) on the de-nuclearisation of Africa adopted at the first assembly of Heads of States and Governments of the Organization, held in Cairo from 17 – 21 July 1964 and resolution 2033 (XX) of the United Nations General Assembly on the de-nuclearisation of Africa, adopted on December 3, 1965 and reiterate the need for a balanced and non-selective implementation of the provision on the NPT, taking into account the commitments taken pursuant to Articles VI of the Treaty. In this respect, the African Group recalls also the inalienable rights of the State Parties to the NPT to peaceful use of nuclear energy for economic and social development purposes as underlined during the African Conference on Nuclear Energy held in Algiers from 9 – 10 January 2007.

The African Group emphasizes the importance of consolidating the existing nuclear-weapon-free zones and the establishment of new nuclear-weapon-free zones on the basis of arrangements freely arrived at among the States of the region concerned. Nuclear-weapon-free zones play an important role in the maintenance of regional peace and security. In this regard, the African Group calls for the early ratification of the treaties of Pelindaba and Rarotonga by the States of the regions concerned to facilitate their entry into force, and it urges those nuclear-weapon States that have not yet done so to sign and ratify the relevant protocols to the nuclear-weapon-free zone treaties, thus guaranteeing security assurances to the countries of the regions concerned.

The African Group strongly supports the establishment of a nuclear-weapon-free zone in the Middle East. The Group calls on countries in the region to take practical and urgent steps for the implementation of proposals for the establishment of such zone. It urges countries of the Middle East to refrain from producing, acquiring or possessing nuclear weapons or nuclear explosive devices, and to also refrain from permitting the stationing of nuclear weapons on their territories by any third party; and to agree to place their nuclear facilities under International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) safeguards.

In line with the Final Document of the of the XIV Conference of Heads of State or Government of the Non-Aligned Movement, held at Havana, Cuba from 14 to 16 September 2006, the African Group reaffirms its long-standing position for the total elimination of nuclear testing. The Group stresses the importance of achieving universal adherence to the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty, including by all nuclear-weapon States, which, among other actions, should contribute to the process of nuclear disarmament. The Group reiterates that, if the objectives of the Treaty are to be fully realized, the continued commitment to nuclear disarmament by all States signatories—especially by the nuclear-weapon States—will be essential.

Concerning item II of the agenda on confidence-building measures, the African Group remains convinced that the ultimate goal of such measures in the field of conventional arms is to strengthen international peace and security and to contribute to the prevention of war. The Group shares the belief that the essence of confidence-building is to guarantee to States a peaceful and stable political environment, in which international relations are governed by clear, predictable and strictly observed norms of international law, which will create conditions that will promote the social, economic and cultural well-being of their peoples.

Practical confidence-building measures in the field of conventional arms should fully respect the purposes and principles of the Charter of the United Nations. The African Group believes that confidence-building measures should not be a substitute or a precondition for disarmament measures and that they should not divert attention from such measures. Confidence-building measures should be developed and applied on a voluntary and reciprocal basis, and they should have as an objective the principle of undiminished security for all. The African Group emphasizes the importance of confidence-building measures at the regional level as crucial for enhancing regional peace and security. The African Group underscores the importance of transparency and verification process in promoting confidence-building measures in disarmament.

The African Group notes with deep concern the recent trend of rising global military expenditures—which, according to available information, are likely to exceed \$1 trillion this year—and calls for reduction of military expenditures in order to release funds needed for development, especially the development of the African continent. The Group believes that reduction of military budgets is an important confidence-building measure that can contribute to global peace and security.

The African Group is deeply concerned about the illicit transfer, manufacture and circulation of Small Arms and Light Weapons and about their excessive accumulation and uncontrolled spread in many regions of the world, especially in Africa. The African Group notes that the first Review Conference on small arms and light weapons (SALW) did not produce an outcome document, nonetheless itself in highlighting the importance of the objectives of the United Nations Programme of Action adopted by consensus in 2001, which outlined a realistic, achievable and comprehensive approach to addressing the problems associated with the illicit trade in Small Arms and Light Weapons at the national, regional and global levels. The African Group reaffirms its belief in the implementation of the Programme of Action as an important confidence-building measure in the field of disarmament.

The Group supports all regional and sub-regional initiatives in Africa, as well as in other regions, in the fight against the illicit proliferation of Small Arms. The Group reaffirms its commitment to the Bamako Ministerial Declaration of 2000 containing an African common position on the illicit trafficking in Small Arms and Light Weapons.

I thank you.