Second Session of the Preparatory Committee Meeting for the
2020 Review Conference of the Parties to the Treaty on the Non-
Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT)
23 April - 4 May 2018, Geneva

STATEMENT BY THE AFRICAN GROUP

Mr. Chairperson,

1. I am honoured to deliver this statement on behalf of the African Group.

2. At the outset the Africa Group would like to congratulate you on your
election as chair of this very important meeting and commends you for the
manner in which you are conducting the work of the PrepCom. The Group
assures you of its full cooperation as we deliberate on taking forward
multilateral nuclear disarmament negotiations.

Mr. Chairperson,

3. The Africa Group was celebrating when at last progress was made and on
7 July 2017, an overwhelming majority of the world’s nations voted to adopt the
Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons – a landmark international
agreement that outlaws nuclear weapons and establishes pathways to their
elimination. The Group wishes to underscore that the Treaty, as adopted,
reinforces our commitment to the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty (NPT) and
complements the treaty. As the international community awaits the realization
of the goal of the total elimination of nuclear weapons, the African Group seeks
more profound and concrete measures in pursuit of the objective of nuclear
disarmament.

4. It is essential that all non-nuclear-weapon states should be provided with
universal, unconditional, non-discriminatory and legally binding assurance, by
all nuclear weapon states, against the use or threat of use of nuclear weapons
under any circumstances. The Group therefore welcomes and underscores the
importance of resolution 70/34, as an integral part of the multilateral
disarmament effort.
Mr. Chairperson,

5. Seven decades after humanity had crossed a new threshold of horror and the world witnessed the first ever use of atomic bombs in Hiroshima and Nagasaki we ask ourselves whether the world has learnt from the past? Let’s continue to speak with unanimity towards ensuring a world free of nuclear weapons and all other weapons of mass destruction, as envisaged in the very first resolution adopted by the UN General Assembly in 1946. It is also the moment to raise our voices against the slow pace and the lack of good faith and commitment on the part nuclear-weapon States to dismantle these weapons and ensure that they are never produced again.

6. The Africa Group regrets the failure of the 9th NPT Review Conference to reach consensus on a final outcome document despite the efforts made by many delegations and calls upon the nuclear-weapon States to demonstrate political will to enable the 2020 Review Conference of the NPT to have concrete recommendations towards achieving nuclear disarmament, the overall/key objective of the NPT. The threat posed to humanity by the continued existence of nuclear weapon is real and the risk significant. In this regard, the African Group insists on the implementation of all agreed measures and undertakings by the nuclear-weapon States in the context of the Treaty.

7. The African Group re-affirms the central role of nuclear-weapon-free zones in the consolidation of the NPT, as well as in their contributions to addressing nuclear disarmament and non-proliferation across all regions of the world. The Treaty of Pelindaba, Tlatelolco, Rarotonga, Bangkok, the Central Asian Nuclear-Weapon-Free Zone and Mongolia’s Nuclear-Weapon-Free-Status, significantly contribute to the overall objective of a world free of nuclear weapons. They enhance global and regional peace and security, strengthen the nuclear non-proliferation regime and contribute towards realizing the objectives of nuclear disarmament.

8. In this context, the African Group remains committed to the Treaty of Pelindaba. Among other things, the Treaty re-affirms the status of Africa as a nuclear-weapon-free zone and provides a shield for the African territory, including by preventing the stationing of nuclear explosive devices on the continent and prohibiting testing of those weapons on the entire space that constitutes the African continent.

9. In the same vein, the African Group restates its deep concern at the lack of progress towards the implementation of the 1995 resolution on the Middle East, which was an integral and essential part of the package of decisions and the basis upon which the consensus was reached on the indefinite extension of the
NPT. The Group wishes to reiterate the continued validity of the 1995 Resolution until all its objectives and purposes are fully implemented.

10. The African Group reiterates the need for all states at all times to comply with applicable international law, including international humanitarian law. Any use of nuclear weapons is a violation of the UN Charter and a crime against humanity. The total elimination of nuclear weapons and the assurance that they will never be produced again is the only unqualified assurance against the catastrophic humanitarian consequences arising from the use of such weapons.

11. The continued existence and possession of nuclear weapons do not guarantee security; but serve as an affirmation of the risks of their potential use. Our world, including outer space, must be free of nuclear weapons and other weapons of mass destruction. It is in the context that the Group stresses the need for the nuclear-weapon States to cease their further modernization, upgrading, refurbishment, or extending the lives of their nuclear weapons and related facilities.

12. The African Group also stresses the importance of achieving universal adherence to the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty (CTBT), bearing in mind the special responsibilities of nuclear-weapons States in this regard. The Group believes that the CTBT offers hope of halting the further development, qualitative improvement and the proliferation of nuclear weapons, thereby contributing to the goal of nuclear disarmament.

13. In conclusion, Mr. Chairperson, the African Group joins other States Parties to reaffirm the importance of the work entrusted to the Conference on Disarmament (CD). In the same breath we wish to underscore that multilateral disarmament negotiations will only achieve tangible results if and when we generate the necessary political will to support the process.

I thank you.