STATEMENT

BY

HER EXCELLENCY,
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AMBASSADOR/PERMANENT REPRESENTATIVE
OF NIGERIA TO THE IAEA

AT

THE GENERAL DEBATE OF THE THIRD PREPARATORY
COMMITTEE MEETING (PREPCOM) OF THE 2020
REVIEW CONFERENCE OF THE PARTIES TO THE
TREATY ON THE NON-PROLIFERATION OF NUCLEAR
WEAPONS

NIGERIA, 29 APRIL 2019

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Mr. Chairman,

The Delegation of Nigeria congratulates you on your election as Chairman of the Third Preparatory Committee for the 2020 Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty Review Conference. Our work will benefit from your tremendous experience, expertise and commitment. We assure you of Nigeria’s full support and cooperation.

2. Nigeria aligns itself with the statements delivered on behalf of the Non-Aligned Movement, the African Group and the Non-Proliferation and Disarmament Initiative (NPDI).

Mr. Chairman,

3. Nuclear weapons remain a major threat to humanity and to global peaceful co-existence. From the threats posed by the early generations of atomic bombs, we are now faced with a collection of modern and far more powerful lethal weapons, whose detonation could spell doom for our entire planet. My country, thus, remains concerned and takes this opportunity to draw attention to the devastating humanitarian consequences of any nuclear weapon detonation.

4. Nigeria considers the current and existential threat of nuclear weapons unacceptable. As States Parties, we are obligated to work concertedly to avert the catastrophic consequences of their possible use or threat of use. As a result, we must not allow this auspicious conference to pass into history without achieving clear progress. We must seize the opportunity it offers to reaffirm our commitment to the NPT, a pivotal instrument for ultimately achieving our collective resolve to eliminate nuclear weapons from the arsenal of States.

5. Harnessing nuclear technology for peaceful purposes and human progress, through cooperation, in line with articles IV of the NPT, remains a priority for our delegation. Accordingly, we reiterate our view that this Review Cycle should pay due attention to all three pillars including Peaceful Uses which remains the only legitimate use of atomic energy. In this connection, we call on the NPT community to reaffirm and protect the inalienable rights of States Parties to use nuclear energy to meet basic and vital human needs such as power generation, food
security, human and animal health, water management and environmental sustainability.

Mr. Chairman,
6. Nigeria supports the goal of general and complete disarmament. We believe that nuclear disarmament and non-proliferation are mutually reinforcing. Indeed, nuclear disarmament remains the only effective path to non-proliferation. We have demonstrated our unrelenting commitment to a nuclear-free world by our ratification of the 1997 model additional protocol, the safeguards agreements with the IAEA, the entry into force of the Treaty of Pelindaba, and as a co-sponsor of the de-alerting resolution.

7. For the same reason, Mr. Chairman, we fully support the Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons (TPNW). Rather than undermine the NPT, the Nuclear Ban Treaty offers a strong and complementary process in furtherance of the disarmament plank of the NPT.

8. As a member of the De-Alerting and the NPDI Groups, our delegation supports the measures put forward by both initiatives to achieve increased transparency in nuclear disarmament; the de-alerting of the operational readiness of nuclear weapons; continued efforts to facilitate the entry into force of the Comprehensive Test Ban Treaty (CTBT); and attempts to commence negotiations of a ban in the production and stockpiling of fissile materials for nuclear weapons.

9. It is imperative that Non-nuclear weapons states are assured against the threat or impact of the deployment of nuclear weapons under a legally binding framework. To preserve the mutual trust necessary to safeguard existing assurances, and pending the entry into force of the CTBT, the moratorium on nuclear testing should be maintained. In addition, we support the growing focus on the humanitarian consequences of the use of nuclear weapons, an element firmly anchored in the NPT and the Nuclear Ban Treaty, and reflected in the 2010 final document.
10. Nigeria continues to welcome any gesture by Nuclear Weapons States to reduce their stockpile of these inhumane weapons. However, our highest expectation is for these states to fulfill their legal obligations as highlighted in article VI of the Treaty, by wholly eliminating their nuclear arsenals. In the end, it is their full commitment to nuclear disarmament that can truly lead to the attainment of the objectives of the NPT. With this in mind, we encourage states that are not party to the NPT, to commence steps towards ratifying the treaty. Mr. Chairman, we have noted the growing diplomatic initiatives on the Korean Peninsula, and we urge the parties concerned to continue on this pacific path till the peninsula is fully and totally disarmed of nuclear weapons.

Mr. Chairman,

11. Nuclear-Weapons-Free Zones are genuine steps towards the total elimination of nuclear weapons. The African Nuclear Weapons Free Zone Treaty (Treaty of PELINDABA) is symbolic of our continent's will in this regard. The treaty continues to consolidate on the objective for its establishment and is a viable contribution of the continent to global peace and stability. Accordingly, while supporting and promoting the Pelindaba Treaty, Nigeria also takes this opportunity to stress its full support for the establishment of free zones across all regions, including in the Middle East.

12. We are conscious that no nation is safe in the event of a successful act of nuclear terrorism. In this regard, Nigeria remains a constructive supporter of all efforts to promote Nuclear Security. We are therefore a party to the International Convention on Suppression of Acts of Nuclear Terrorism (INCSANT) as well as other relevant frameworks on this matter including the Convention on Physical Protection of Nuclear Materials and its amendment which we have since ratified. We continue to do all that we can within our region and also internationally to forestall nuclear terrorism.

13. My delegation reiterates the catastrophic humanitarian consequences that could result from either a deliberate use and/or unintentional explosion of nuclear weapons. It is in this light that Nigeria calls on all States, particularly nuclear weapons States, to take into
consideration, the catastrophic humanitarian consequences of the use of these weapons on human health, the environment and vital economic resources among others, and to take necessary measures aimed at the dismantling and renunciation of these weapons.

14. To conclude, Mr. Chairman, the innumerable benefits of nuclear disarmament are never in doubt. The Conference on Disarmament must, therefore, overcome its inertia. States Parties to the NPT and indeed all Member States of the United Nations, must concretely demonstrate sincerity of purposes and commitment to the goals of the NPT in particular, nuclear weapons disarmament- a pillar on which there has been no progress. Nigeria is strongly committed to meeting its obligations under the treaty and our delegation promises to engage constructively in the course of this conference. We urge all other parties to do the same.

Thank you Mr. Chair.