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STATEMENT

BY

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GENERAL DEBATE ON ALL DISARMAMENT AND
INTERNATIONAL SECURITY AGENDA ITEMS OF THE
FIRST COMMITTEE

NEW YORK, FRIDAY 11TH OCTOBER 2013
Mr. Chairman,

My delegation would like to join others who have spoken before us in congratulating you on your election as chairman of the First Committee. We have no doubt that our work will benefit tremendously from your experience, expertise and commitment. We assure you of our full support and cooperation. I also wish to commend your predecessor, H.E. Desra Percaya of Indonesia for his leadership and commendable efforts in the cause of disarmament. Nigeria aligns itself with the Statement of the Non-Aligned Movement delivered by the distinguished Permanent Representative of Indonesia and that of the African Group read by my delegation.

Mr. Chairman,

At the 67th Session of UNGA, having assessed a number of daunting issues that confronted our world over the past years as well as the minimum required of us towards addressing them, the delegation of Nigeria highlighted what we considered as the minimum requirements to ensure our follow-up to commitments on disarmament.

There is no doubt that our world remains at the threshold. We are daily confronted with a number of probabilities. These include the threat of use or actual use of a wide range of weapons capable of destroying cities, harm populations and ruin our civilizations. These range from Nuclear, Chemical, Biological as well as illicitly acquired small arms and light weapons.

In spite of these challenges, we remain optimistic that the international community would see the need for concerted action towards addressing those issues of grave importance. The optimism expressed by my delegation is premised on the series of measures taken to facilitate the global agenda for disarmament and international security and the positive impact those measures could produce in the future.

Since the last session, we have seen renewed efforts to address a wide spectrum of challenges to disarmament, non-proliferation and international security. My delegation welcomes the successful adoption of the resolution on the Arms Trade Treaty (ATT) in April this year as a step in the right direction. We also note the enthusiasm shown by participants during the second Preparatory Committee Meeting (PrepCom) on the 2015 Review Conference of the NPT, and the convening of the historic High-level Meeting on Nuclear Disarmament.
Mr. Chairman,

Despite what some may consider as achievements, my delegation remains deeply concerned about the lack of far-reaching and meaningful progress, particularly on the issue of nuclear disarmament. We reaffirm our belief that nuclear weapons are the ultimate weapons of mass destruction and their total elimination should be the final objective of all disarmament processes in the United Nations. In view of this, we continue to restate our opposition to the modernization of existing nuclear weapons and the development of new types.

We consider the continued existence and possession of nuclear weapons as inimical to the promotion of international peace and security. If goodwill and common sense will not rid the world of these doomsday weapons, we believe enlightened self-interest should prevail on those possessing nuclear weapons, to get rid of them. As it has variously been expressed, they offer no credible defence against other enemies possessing similar weapons, and they pose an existential threat to those who do not possess them at all.

If the overarching goal of nuclear disarmament is a world free of nuclear weapons; then the world could, at least, demonstrate that the possession and retention of over 20,000 nuclear warheads and considerable number in the state of alert and readiness, in the arsenals of states; remain not only unacceptable, but should be repudiated. Compliance with the NPT in our view should go hand in hand with the willingness of the nuclear weapons states to disarm and disavow the continued possession of such weapons. At the moment, astronomical cost of global defence budgets remain at unacceptable proportion.

Mr. Chairman,

Despite its unsavoury outcome, Nigeria welcomes the 2nd Session of the PrepCom for the 2015 NPT Review Conference which yet provided an opportunity for assessing the implementation of the Treaty. We believe that this meeting and the remaining one session of the PrepCom before 2015, should contribute to the overall strategy for the full implementation of the action plans adopted at the 2010 NPT Review Conference as it concerns nuclear disarmament, nuclear non-proliferation, peaceful uses of nuclear energy, as well as the implementation of the 1995 resolution on the Middle-East. In this regard, we look forward, despite the disappointment of the postponed Helsinki Conference, to a new date to be scheduled on the subject of the establishment of a Middle East zone free of nuclear weapons and all other weapons of mass destruction.

We will continue to support the call for effective assurances to all Non-Nuclear Weapon States (NNWS) against the use or threat of use of nuclear weapons by Nuclear Weapons
States (NWS). We stress the necessity of the conclusion of a universal, unconditional and legally binding instrument on Negative Security Assurances to all Non-Nuclear Weapons States.

Mr. Chairman,

The delegation of Nigeria welcomes the Eight Article XIV Conference on Facilitating the Entry into Force of the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty Nigeria believes in the propriety of achieving universal adherence to the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty (CTBT) convened in this same room exactly two weeks ago. We commend Chad, Guinea Bissau and Iraq on their recent ratifications of the CTBT. The intrinsic value of the CTBT in setting a global norm against any kind of nuclear explosion, and enabling the international community to respond immediately to any challenges to this established norm cannot be over-stressed. We recognize this as essential to promoting the process of nuclear disarmament. We seize this opportunity to call on all States that have not signed or ratified the Treaty, in particular Annex 11 States, to do so.

With regards to the Conference on Disarmament (CD), we reiterate that its long standing inability to agree on a programme of work and act on the mandate given to it by the First Special Session on Disarmament (SSOD 1) is adversely affecting its reputation and credibility. We hope that the CD would benefit from, among others, the momentum generated by the Open-ended Working Group on taking forward multilateral negotiations on nuclear disarmament established by this Assembly last year as well as the High Level Meeting on Nuclear Disarmament held last month. The unequivocal message that these efforts conveyed to the CD was that the world was disappointed by the stalemate in the CD and its perennial non-performance. We call for a closure to the impasse, which, for close to two decades, has made the annual sessions of the CD barren and devoid of any satisfactory outcomes. Clearly, this is not a situation that should be allowed to go on indefinitely.

Nigeria believes in the urgent revitalization of the CD. Its membership should be reviewed and expanded. The CD should also welcome greater engagement by the civil society and Member States should demonstrate the political will and commitment necessary to break the current impasse and move the process forward. In the same context, we support the call for the immediate commencement of the long delayed negotiations on a Fissile Material Cutoff Treaty (FMCT). We hope that the upcoming UN Group of Governmental Experts (GGE) on FMCT will come up with useful ideas on the way forward by addressing all issues related to the FMCT, including negotiations on existing stock of Fissile Material.
Having acceded to the universality of the Chemical Weapons Convention (CWC) and the Biological/Toxins Weapons Conventions, and in view of the recent unfortunate case of the use of chemical weapons in Syria, my delegation feels the compelling need to call on the remaining States that have not ratified these two conventions to do so without delay.

Mr. Chairman,

Like many others before us, we welcome the successful outcome of the final Conference on the Arms Trade Treaty (ATT) which led to the adoption of the resolution on the ATT in April, 2013. Nigeria signed and ratified the treaty on 12th August, 2013. We seize this opportunity to commend the efforts of Ambassadors Roberto Moritan and Peter Woolcott, as well as Member States for their constructive contributions on the seven-year project. We call for the cooperation of all to ensure its early entry into force.

My delegation acknowledges that an unregulated conventional arms transfer system fuels the illicit trade and, invariably leads to unfettered access and unauthorized use by non-State actors, individuals and/or groups. As a measure of commitment to world peace and in pursuit of the objective of this Assembly, we urge major arms producers and exporters to ratify the treaty and work towards appropriate implementation, upon its entry into force.

Nigeria, in addition, welcomes the successful conclusion of the Second Review Conference to review the implementation of the UN Programme of Action on small arms and light weapons. My delegation continues to stress that a successful implementation of the PoA is largely dependent on international cooperation and assistance. In this regard, my delegation looks forward to the 5th Biennial Meeting of States on UN PoA on SALWs in 2014 and promises to work with the Chair-designate as he commences consultations in earnest.

We want to emphasize the importance of the First Committee to the realization of the objectives of the UN Charter. We reiterate that the ethos of multilateralism remains the safest guarantee of international peace and security. My delegation shall therefore continue to work constructively in this Committee and all other fora towards achieving the goal of disarmament.