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STATEMENT

BY

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AT THE

68TH SESSION OF THE UN GENERAL ASSEMBLY

FIRST COMMITTEE DEBATE ON NUCLEAR DISARMAMENT CLUSTER

NEW YORK, MONDAY 21ST OCTOBER, 2013
Mr. Chairman,

Let me begin by expressing the appreciation of my delegation for the able manner that you have been directing the affairs of the First Committee. It gives us hope that we will complete our work in a timely and efficient manner. Please also be assured of our continued cooperation and support.

We align ourselves with the Statement delivered on behalf of the Non-Aligned Movement by the Republic of Indonesia as well as the statement delivered by the delegation of Nigeria on behalf of the De-alerting Group. We also align ourselves with the joint Statement delivered by New Zealand on the Humanitarian Consequences of nuclear weapons. Nigeria sees continued relevance and importance in calling on Nuclear Weapon States to decrease the operational readiness of their nuclear weapons.

Mr. Chairman,

On behalf of the African Group, the Nigerian delegation would like to introduce the draft resolution entitled: “African Nuclear-Weapon-Free Zone Treaty”, also known as The Treaty of Pelindaba. This draft resolution has already been circulated to delegations. We note with satisfaction, the overwhelming support for this resolution in past sessions of the General Assembly and we call on all delegations to continue to support it. The presentation of the resolution is to re-emphasize Africa’s strong commitment to maintaining the continent as a zone free of nuclear weapons. With a view to ensuring the effectiveness of the Treaty, we urge nuclear-weapon States that have not yet ratified its relevant protocols to do so without further delay.
The Nigerian delegation sees nuclear weapon free zones as a credible means of promoting nuclear non-proliferation and nuclear disarmament. Their significance lies not just in the fact that they ban the production and possession of nuclear weapons within their member states, the fact they also ban the stationing of such weapons within the zones is also highly significant.

We recall that during the Review Conference of the Parties to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons in 2010, Member States called for the convening in 2012 of a conference on the establishment of Middle East zone free of nuclear weapons and all other weapons of mass destruction. Notwithstanding what we see as initial setback, my delegation welcomes continued efforts to host the conference and call on all stakeholders to work towards its success. The Nigerian delegation believes that with demonstration of the necessary political will and a determination to succeed by all concerned, the important and essential goal of a Middle East free of nuclear weapons and weapons of mass destruction will be attained.

Mr. Chairman,

While nuclear weapon states have continued to hold on to their stockpiles, a new phase in the nuclear arms race is evolving with more states acquiring the capacity to develop nuclear weapons. Despite some reductions in the arsenals of the nuclear weapon states, we consider these to be merely cosmetic measures as the remaining stockpiles continue to pose a danger to mankind. It is for this reason that Nigeria welcomes the CTBT and urges those countries that are yet to sign on to it to do so without delay to facilitate its entry into force.
The proliferation of nuclear weapons creates the problem of the security of these instruments of destruction, especially with the threat of global terrorism. The risk of nuclear materials falling into the hands of non-state actors, including the risk of transfer of nuclear technology to terrorist groups remains a matter of great concern to Nigeria. We, therefore, welcome the role of the IAEA in monitoring and inspecting nuclear facilities and urge concerned countries to ensure observance of IAEA safeguards at all times. Nigeria will also be introducing at this session, on behalf of the African Group, a Resolution titled: "Prohibition of the dumping of radioactive wastes". The resolution has enjoyed overwhelming support in past sessions of the General Assembly. We also call on all delegations to continue to support it by consensus.

We welcome the convening of the High-level Meeting on Nuclear Disarmament on 26th September, 2013 and supports all follow-up measures to ensure the attainment of its goal - a world free of nuclear weapons. We consider the increasing efforts to focus global attention on the dangers of nuclear terrorism and the urgent need for counter measures to promote international cooperation to fight terrorism.

Mr. Chairman,

Global machineries for measuring the pulse of the dangers faced by the global community in the acquisition of nuclear weapons as well as the progress made towards nuclear disarmament in today's world are numerous. What has clearly been lacking, is the political will to ensure implementation. In this context, my delegation considers obligations of State Parties to the
Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty (NPT) and respect for the three-pillar system contained in its preamble and eleven articles as ultimate to our goal of nuclear disarmament.

We are convinced that a broader compliance with the tenor of the NPT would serve useful purpose in addressing the challenges associated with nuclear disarmament, including clandestine development of its broad systems and the craving associated with its acquisition and ownership. We welcome the basic NPT philosophy which emphasis that nuclear weapon States commit themselves to nuclear disarmament while non-nuclear weapons States adhere to the principles of non-acquisition of nuclear weapons. In this regard, we call on all State parties to demonstrate practical commitment to Article VI of the NPT.

My delegation restates its commendation on the outcome of the 1st Session of the PrepCom for the 2015 NPT Review Conference which provided an opportunity for assessing the implementation of the Treaty. Despite the not-so-pleasant conclusion of the 2nd Session of the PrepCom, we remain hopeful that the remaining session in New York scheduled to be held next year in New York, would contribute to the overall strategy for the full implementation of the action plans adopted at the 2010 NPT Review Conference.

In addition, Nigeria believes that the fear of nuclear confrontation among the Nuclear - Weapon States, including the reluctance to halt horizontal and vertical development of weapons, lack of commitment and
political will to dismantle their nuclear arsenals in line with Articles I and III of the NPT, will continue to occupy considerable attention among member States. It is for this reason that my delegation intends to use this opportunity to reiterate the concerns raised by the de-alerting Group as well as the Statement on the humanitarian consequences of nuclear disarmament, as earlier presented by distinguished delegate of New Zealand.

Nigeria believes in the usefulness of the Comprehensive Test Ban Treaty (CTBT) in the overall process of nuclear disarmament and calls for the removal of all impediments which continue to stall its entry into force after fifteen years. We welcome the Eighth Conference on Facilitating the Entry into Force of the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty (Article XIV), held in New York on 27th September, 2013 as well as its outcome. While commending the efforts of the CTBTO in the continuous building of the verification regime for the treaty, we seize this opportunity to call on States yet to ratify the CTBT—in particular the remaining Annex II States - to do so without further delay.

Mr. Chairman,

As a State Party to the NPT and a member of the CD, Nigeria continues to promote a multilateral process and join other Member States, including NAM and the African Group in expressing support for the NPT as the cornerstone for deepening the global non-proliferation regime. The next Review Conference is less than two years away, but we could assist the agenda of the Conference by demonstrating commitment to transparently address the process. We, therefore, support all useful international efforts toward
achieving nuclear disarmament, including the best intentions of the General Assembly to advance the cause of nuclear disarmament.

I thank you.