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STATEMENT

BY

USMAN SARKI

AMBASSADOR/DEPUTY PERMANENT REPRESENTATIVE
PERMANENT MISSION OF NIGERIA TO THE UNITED
NATIONS, NEW YORK

AT THE

68TH SESSION OF THE UN GENERAL ASSEMBLY
FIRST COMMITTEE DEBATE ON OTHER WEAPONS OF
MASS DESTRUCTION

NEW YORK, FRIDAY 25TH OCTOBER, 2013
Mr. Chairman,

I congratulate you again on behalf of the delegation of Nigeria and assure you of our continued support and cooperation. It is profound that this cluster addresses all issues of implementation of the Convention on the Prohibition of the Development, Production, Acquisition and Stockpiling and use of Chemical Weapons.

Let me also join others who have earlier spoken, to commend the Organization for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons (OPCW) and felicitate with the body on the enviable award of the 2013 Nobel Peace Prize. This is, indeed, a most welcome compliment in recognition of the efforts by the OPCW to ensure a total and complete evaluation and on-site inspections of declarations by Member States. We commend all Member States and the extraordinary work of the Organization led by its distinguished Director-General, Ambassador Ahmet Uzumcu.

Nigeria recognizes the importance of Chemical Weapons Convention, not only in the prevention of proliferation of chemical weapons but also in the concerted efforts towards the total destruction of their stockpiles. In this regard, let me seize this opportunity to congratulate the OPCW for its giant stride in the past fifteen years of its existence, particularly the guidance provided by its management, administration and the technical expert team. We also recognise the
tireless efforts and leadership of the UN Secretary-General, H.E. Ban Ki-Moon and the key role played by his staff.

Having signed and ratified the Chemical Weapons Convention (CWC), Nigeria has remained committed to fulfilling her obligations in meeting CWC’s overall objectives of promotion and verification of adherence to the Convention on the significant issue of prohibition of the use of chemical weapons as well as their destruction. Nigeria signed the Chemical Weapons Convention on 13th January, 1993 and ratified same on 1st March 1999. My country also became a signatory to the Biological/Toxins Weapons Convention (BTWC) on 10th July 1972 and ratified the Convention the following year. We therefore support meaningful action to strengthen its objectives. In this regard, we congratulate Cameroon, Guyana, Malawi, the Marshall Islands and Nauru for becoming States Parties to the Biological Weapons Convention in the last one year.

Mr. Chairman,

As a member of the Executive Council of the OPCW, and having recently been appointed as Chair of the OPCW’s International Working Group on Anti-Terrorism, Nigeria continues to support initiatives by the Organization towards the universalization of ban on the use of Chemical Weapons. We acceded to the universality of CWC, and have worked assiduously to ensure strict adherence to its ethos. Chemical Weapons Convention remains a unique instrument of multilateral disarmament
agreement. We note the Organization's phenomenal growth from the initial 65 member countries to the present near universal membership of 190 Member States and urge the remaining UN Member States yet to become part of this noble cause to commence the process and ensure ratification and membership.

My delegation wishes to place on record, its commendation, for the decisive approach through which OPCW experts collaborated with the UN in addressing the reported and very unfortunate case of the use of Chemical Weapons in Syria. Nigeria remains strongly committed to steps and measures to prevent a re-emergence of the use of Chemical Weapons under any guise.

In furtherance of its commitment and obligations to the CWC, Nigeria hosted the Annual Regional Meeting of the National Authorities of States Parties in Africa few years ago (2005), and has proposed to host a Regional and National Sensitization Workshop in collaboration with OPCW between the last quarter of 2013 and the second quarter of 2014. Indeed, Nigeria has benefitted in a number of OPCW organized programmes and will continue to participate in sponsored capacity building programmes, including exchange of scientific and technical information for purposes not prohibited under the convention.

The delegation of Nigeria seizes this opportunity to seek the cooperation of all States Parties to CWC, to work together for the
realization of a total ban on the production, acquisition and stockpiling of Chemical Weapons, including the prevention of the emergence of new types of these weapons of mass destruction.

As a State Party, Nigeria recognizes the gains of a faithful implementation of the Chemical Weapons Convention (CWC) as well as the Biological/Toxins Weapons Convention (BTWC). In this regard, we will continue to fulfill obligations towards the promotion of the universalization of these Conventions, particularly the Chemical Weapons Convention. This commitment includes the enactment of enabling laws presently under the consideration of the nation’s National Assembly. We are optimistic of a positive outcome of the efforts mounted by the National Authority on Chemical & Biological Weapons Conventions to actualize the legislation of the two Conventions.

Let me at this juncture, assure you of Nigeria’s continued commitments to the ideals of CWC and BTWC respectively and urge all nations/States, be they States Parties or non-States Parties. This measure is necessary, if we are to avoid the pitfall of the use of Chemical Weapons, under supposed threat or alleged provocation. The OPCW has demonstrated the capacity to ensure the destruction of Chemical Weapons, provided these stockpiles are declared accordingly.

I thank you.