PERMANENT MISSION OF NIGERIA TO THE UNITED NATIONS
828 SECOND AVENUE • NEW YORK, N.Y. 10017 • TEL. (212) 953-9130 • FAX (212) 697-1970

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STATEMENT

BY

AMBASSADOR USMAN SARKI
DEPUTY PERMANENT REPRESENTATIVE

AT THE

THIRD COMMITTEE OF THE 68TH SESSION OF THE
UNITED NATIONS GENERAL ASSEMBLY

ON AGENDA ITEM 69: PROMOTION AND PROTECTION OF
HUMAN RIGHT
SUB ITEMS: A & D

NEW YORK, 30TH OCTOBER, 2013
Mr. Chairman,

My delegation welcomes the opportunity to contribute to the debate under this agenda item.

2. Nigeria stands by the affirmation of the Vienna Declaration and Programme of Action (VDPA) that all human rights are universal, indivisible, interdependent and inter-related. This necessarily means that all human rights are equal, whether civil, political, economic, social or cultural. States should renew their commitment to the VDPA as a way of upholding one of the three pillars of the UN, which is the promotion and protection of human rights.

3. We are deeply concerned by the fact that racism, racial discrimination, xenophobia and related intolerance continue to threaten the rights of millions of people in various parts of the world. The Durban Declaration and Programme of Action (DDPA) is the most comprehensive framework for addressing these issues. The vision of this profound effort is consistent with the fundamental principles of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, predicated on equality, dignity, freedom and rights of all human beings. It is imperative that the international community unites in the fight against racism, racial discrimination, xenophobia and related intolerance. States should take measures that would see the commitments of the DDPA translated into concrete action.

Mr. Chairman,

4. Nigeria is greatly concerned about the growing cases of dumping of toxic waste in developing countries, particularly in West Africa. We note that in recent times, this is more in the form of used and discarded electrical and electronic equipment exported from developed countries or so-called e-waste. This is a grave violation of the rights of the citizens of these countries to the enjoyment of the highest standards of health and to life in general, and if left unchecked, could lead to sustained environmental damage in the affected
countries, which in turn could negatively affect the livelihood of millions of people.

5. Nigeria calls on the countries from where this e-waste is being exported to do more to put an end to this obnoxious practice. The international community and relevant international organizations should support the developing countries in their fight against the dumping of hazardous waste.

*M. Chairman,*

6. Migrants and their families continue to be subjected to discrimination and xenophobia in many countries. Migrants suffer from marginalization, stigmatization, socio-economic exclusion and denial of access to education and health care. They are often blamed for crime waves and for causing economic hardship, as a pretext to justify attacking them. We condemn, in the strongest terms, violent attacks on migrants and call on the countries where these attacks occur to do more to protect the human rights of migrants and their families, and ensure that they live in dignity and free from fear.

7. The advocacy being undertaken by the Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR) and the International Organization for Migration (OM) for the inclusion of the human rights of migrants in the post-2015 development agenda is indeed commendable. We welcome efforts by these agencies at ensuring that human rights standards and norms are integrated into all aspects of migration policy at the national, regional and international levels.

8. It is necessary to draw attention, once again, to the fact that more than two decades after the adoption of the International Convention on the Protection of the Rights of All Migrant Workers and Members of their Families by the General Assembly, less than 50 States have signed, ratified or acceded to the Convention. We note, with grave concern, that the developed countries, which are largely migrant-receiving, have not signed the Convention. States that have not signed this important instrument should do so expeditiously as
a way of demonstrating their commitment to promoting and protecting the rights of migrants and members of their families.

Mr. Chairman,

9. We seize this opportunity to clarify some issues pertaining to enjoyment of human rights and the exercise of freedom of expression in Nigeria. Contrary to negative perceptions in some quarters, there is no violence or discrimination against any citizen of Nigeria based on their life styles or inclinations.

10. Nigeria respects the decision of those countries that have, by reason of local conditions and beliefs, chosen to legalize same-sex marriage. We would not, by any means, try to put pressure on them to change their laws just because we do not accept same-sex marriage. In the same vein, we would like to ask that other countries respect our right to make laws that are in consonance with our beliefs and customs. The Federal Government of Nigeria will continue to make laws that reflect the will of the vast majority of Nigerians, and are in the overall national interest of our country.

11. I thank you for your attention.