



PERMANENT MISSION OF NIGERIA TO THE UNITED NATIONS

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STATEMENT OF NIGERIA

BY

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FIRST SECRETARY
PERMANENT MISSION OF NIGERIA TO THE UNITED NATIONS**

AT THE

**GENERAL DEBATE OF THE 2018 SUBSTANTIVE SESSION OF THE
UNITED NATIONS DISARMAMENT COMMISSION (UNDC)**

NEW YORK, 2 APRIL 2018

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Madam Chair,

My delegation congratulates you on your election as the Chairperson of this year's Substantive Session of the United Nations Disarmament Commission (UNDC). As you steer the course of our work, my delegation is confident that your experience will guide our deliberations at this session. We assure you of our full cooperation. Permit me to also express our appreciation to your predecessor, Amb. Gabriela Martinic of Argentina, for her leadership and contributions. We extend our sincere appreciation to the High Representative for Disarmament Affairs for her remarks. Nigeria aligns itself with the statements delivered by the Non-Aligned Movement (NAM) and the African Group.

Madam Chair,

2. Nigeria underscores the importance of the UNDC as the sole specialized and deliberative body within the United Nations multilateral disarmament machinery. While recognizing its usefulness and potential as the competent forum for addressing issues of comprehensive nuclear disarmament, we wish to state that the UNDC needs to streamline and improve upon its working methods to enable it deliver on its mandate, with particular reference to nuclear disarmament as a topmost priority, and to pointedly confront the challenges of non-proliferation.

3. My delegation welcomes the conclusion of work and the adoption, by consensus, of the recommendations on "Practical confidence-building measures in the field of conventional weapons" during the 2017 UNDC Session, and expresses regret that consensus was not reached on the agenda item "nuclear disarmament". In that context, my delegation hopes to witness an outcome that provides for far-reaching and unambiguous recommendations in the field of disarmament and non-proliferation during this cycle .

Madam Chair,

4. The continued existence of nuclear weapons remains an existential threat to all mankind. The cost of maintenance and modernization of these weapons are both outrageous and inexcusable, when compared to resources allocated by States for more useful and productive ventures that could further the growth, development, prosperity and other peaceful and positive articulation of human endeavours.

5. My delegation seizes this opportunity to again highlight the 1996 Advisory Opinion of the International Court of Justice (ICJ), which affirms that the threat or use of nuclear weapons constitutes a crime against humanity and a violation of international law, including international humanitarian law.

6. My delegation stresses that the universalization of the Non-Proliferation Treaty is dependent upon strict compliance with its three pillars: disarmament, non-proliferation and peaceful uses of nuclear energy. As we prepare for the next Review Conference in 2020, my delegation hopes that efforts of all member states would be geared towards strengthening the NPT by truly reinforcing its three pillars.

Madam Chair,

7. My delegation reiterates its view that the catastrophic humanitarian consequences that could result from either a deliberate use and/or unintentional explosion of nuclear weapons should serve as a compelling reason for all states to address the question of the continued possession of nuclear weapons.

9. Nuclear weapons still remain the ultimate agents of mass destruction and their total elimination should be the final objective of all disarmament processes within the broad spectrum of goals being pursued by the United Nations. To this end, my delegation heartily welcomes the adoption of the land mark Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons which opened for

signature on 20 September 2017. My delegation remains proud to have participated actively in the processes leading to its adoption, as well as being one of the first countries to sign the treaty. Our commitment was guided by Nigeria's principled position on the denuclearization of the world.

10. As a State Party to the Treaty of Pelindaba, Nigeria welcomes the establishment of Nuclear Weapon Free Zones(NWFZ) in parts of the world. The treaty serves as a shield for the continent of Africa, including by preventing the stationing of nuclear explosive devices on the continent and prohibiting testing of nuclear weapons. As a measure to ensure a world free from the fear or possibility of the use of nuclear weapons, my delegation further calls on all Member States to support efforts to replicate this measure in the remaining parts of the world, including in the Middle East.

Madam Chair,

11. Nigeria has continually highlighted the need for the peaceful uses of outer space, and in this context, emphasizes the importance of preventing the weaponisation of the outer space to preserve peace and security to the benefit of all mankind. In this regard, we strongly support the negotiation of a treaty preventing an arms race in outer space and for interim transparency and confidence-building measures toward that end.

12. Nigeria remains committed to using its space science capabilities for developmental purposes and, to that end, we have embarked on several developmental projects some of which include desertification sensitivity index, population dissymmetric analysis and carbon emission assessment, among others. Nigeria firmly believes that space technology has the immense potential to benefit both developed and developing countries, and in this regard the UN needs to promote equal and non-discriminatory access to outer space, irrespective of levels of social, economic or scientific development.

13. Nigeria wishes to highlight the efforts of UN Regional Centers for Peace and Disarmament in terms of their contributions to disarmament measures and other future challenges. My delegation notes the valuable input of the United Nations Regional Center for Peace and Disarmament in Africa, particularly in its efforts to ensure the provision of a robust programme on capacity-building and in extending technical assistance to many States on the continent of Africa. My delegation promises to work stridently towards fulfilling the mandate of the UNDC as highlighted by the First Special Session of the United Nations on Disarmament (SSOD- I).

14. Finally, Madam Chair, as we start a new cycle, my delegation remains hopeful that Member States would be flexible as we begin deliberations in the coming days.

I thank you.