



Permanent Mission of The State of Eritrea  
To the United Nations, New York

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**STATEMENT BY H.E. OSMAN SALEH MOHAMMED,  
MINISTER OF FOREIGN AFFAIRS OF THE STATE OF ERITREA  
ON BEHALF OF THE AFRICAN GROUP  
AT THE HIGH LEVEL MEETING OF THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY ON NUCLEAR  
DISARMAMENT  
NEW YORK 26TH SEPTEMBER, 2013**

Mr. President,  
Mr. Secretary General,  
Excellencies, Distinguished Delegates,  
Ladies and Gentlemen,

1. It is an honor to speak on behalf of the African Group at this first ever High-level Meeting on Nuclear Disarmament. The African continent acknowledges the participation of many world leaders today as a clear manifestation of the wide support for this important subject.
2. The African Group recognizes your efforts, Amb. Ashe and those of your predecessor, H.E. Vuk Jeremic in organizing this meeting. The Group welcomes the earlier remarks by the Secretary General. The Group seizes commends the Non-Aligned Movement (NAM) that initiated this meeting through its sponsored resolution, and associates with the Statement delivered on its behalf by the Distinguished President of the Islamic Republic of Iran, H.E. Hassan Rouhani.

Excellencies, Ladies and Gentlemen,

3. Nuclear Disarmament remains our highest priority and the success of this meeting would be measured by our commitments to the implementation of its recommendations. In this regard, the vision envisaged at this meeting by Africa and indeed, the entire world, is the need to meaningfully contribute to achieving the goal of nuclear disarmament as a necessary measure towards the total elimination of nuclear weapons.
4. In 1946, guided by the ethos of progress and the need to save succeeding generations from the dangers of nuclear wars, this very Assembly rightfully sought to rid our world of such weapons through its first resolution. The overwhelming acceptance of

that resolution signified the urgent need to address the challenges of nuclear disarmament and non-proliferation. Nearly seven decades on, the world continues to grapple with similar problems in greater dimension. Sadly, and despite persistent calls by non-Nuclear Weapon States and the Civil Society to halt their development, the possessors of these weapons have continued to invest more in the modernization of such devastating weapons at the expense of social economic development.

5. The Group recognizes calls by many Member States, interest groups and organizations to encourage nuclear weapons states to de-emphasize security dependence on nuclear weapons and considers any doctrine justifying their use as unacceptable, including threat to non-Nuclear-Weapon States by nuclear weapons States. While ideas such as "de-targeting", "de-alerting operational readiness" and reducing the current number of nuclear weapons are steps in the right direction, it needs to be stressed that these concepts alone should not be mistaken as a ready substitute for their total elimination.

Excellencies, Ladies and Gentlemen,

6. Nuclear weapons pose a present and existential threat to mankind and their use would be a violation of the UN Charter and international law. In this regard, the Group calls on nuclear weapons States to consider the catastrophic humanitarian consequences of any use of nuclear weapons and to take measures aimed at voluntary renunciation and dismantling of these weapons.
7. The African Group commends States that have renounced the acquisition, development and production, including honouring multilaterally the negotiated treaty to ban nuclear tests. Such actions demonstrate to all of us that the goal of nuclear disarmament is real and feasible.
8. As an agreement freely established by groups of States, the valuable contributions of nuclear-weapon-free zones to nuclear disarmament and international peace and security cannot be overstressed. The Group recalls the entry into force of the Treaty of Pelindaba in 2010, which makes Africa a nuclear-weapon-free zone. In large part, the treaty models the objective of this meeting by, among other things, calling for the renunciation of nuclear explosive devices, preventing the stationing of nuclear explosive devices on the continent and prohibiting testing of nuclear explosive devices.
9. The African Group also acknowledges the useful purposes served by the establishment of nuclear-weapon-free zone in the consolidation of the NPT and addressing nuclear non-proliferation, in its region and in other regions of the world where they exist and calls upon all Nuclear-Weapon States to ratify related protocols to all treaties establishing such zones.

Excellencies, Ladies and Gentlemen

10. The African Group strongly supports the establishment of a nuclear-weapon-free zone in the Middle East. Pending its establishment, the Group urges Israel, the only country in the region that has not joined the NPT, nor declared its intention to do so, to renounce any possession of nuclear weapons, and accede to the NPT without precondition and further delay. The Group expresses deep concern at the fact that the conference on the establishment of a zone free of nuclear weapons and all other weapons of mass destruction in the Middle East due to have been held in 2012 has not yet been convened, despite the consensus decision of the 2010 NPT Review Conference. The continuing delay in convening the conference runs contrary to the letter and spirit of the 1995 Resolution. The group urges the unconditional participation of all States in the Middle East, including Israel.

Excellencies, Ladies and Gentlemen,

11. Nuclear disarmament and non-proliferation are mutually reinforcing. In so much as nuclear weapons exist, the risk of their use, threat of use and proliferation will persist. In the circumstance, the only absolute guarantee remains their total elimination.
12. We remain deeply concerned with the impasse in the UN disarmament machinery. We call for the early commencement of negotiations, in the Conference on Disarmament (CD) on a comprehensive Convention on nuclear weapons for the prohibition of their possession, development, production, acquisition, testing, stockpiling, transfer, use or threat of use, and destruction. The African Group supports the Road Map proposed by the NAM in this regard.

Excellencies, Ladies and Gentlemen,

13. The memories of Hiroshima and Nagasaki are reminders of the horrors of the use of nuclear weapons. The only assurance the world has against the devastation and misery of the effects of these weapons therefore, is their total elimination. This generation and children yet unborn deserve to live in a peaceful, secure and prosperous world, not one dominated by fear of detonation of nuclear bombs.

1. I thank you all.

