Mr. Chairman,

I have asked for the floor on behalf of the African Group to introduce the draft resolution contained in document A/43/523 entitled 'Prohibition of the Dumping of Radioactive Wastes'.

Mr. Chairman,

Dumping of radioactive wastes poses serious threat to security and development of all States. It constitutes a serious health hazard to the inhabitants of the area in which they may be found and is known to be profoundly harmful to the environment. Some developing countries, particularly the least developing countries, have been victims of dumping of radioactive wastes. Until the adoption by the General Assembly of the first resolution on the prohibition of the dumping of radioactive wastes at the initiative of the African Group at its forty-third session in 1988, Africa had been a favourable destination for transporters of radioactive wastes in search of territories in which to dump them. Concerned about the serious effects of dumping of radioactive wastes, it is the wish of the Africa Group that the international community as represented at this meeting should continue to sustain this resolution to protect States from indiscriminate dumping of radioactive wastes that may infringe on their sovereignty.

The Council of Ministers of the Organisation of African Unity (now African Union) had in 1988 and again in 1989 adopted resolutions concerning the dumping of nuclear and industrial wastes in Africa. Since then, the international community understood the need to address the issue of radioactive wastes. This is particularly so with respect to the States Members of the IAEA. On 21 September 1990, the General Conference of the International Atomic Energy Agency at its 34th regular session adopted a resolution establishing Code of Practice on the International Transboundary Movement of Radioactive Waste. Also on 21 September 2001, the General Conference at its 45th regular session adopted a resolution inviting States that ship radioactive materials to provide, as appropriate, assurances to concerned States upon their request, that the national regulation of the shipping State take into account the Agency's transport regulations and to provide the concerned States with relevant information relating to the shipment of such materials; the information provided should in no case be contradictory to the measures of physical security and safety. On 5 September 1997 in Vienna, the Joint Convention on the Safety of Spent Fuel Management and on the Safety of Radioactive Waste Management was adopted as recommended by the participants at the Summit on Nuclear Safety and Security.

Mr. Chairman,
The draft resolution being introduced calls upon all States to take appropriate measures with a view to preventing any dumping of nuclear or radioactive wastes that would infringe upon the sovereignty of States. It expresses grave concern regarding any use of nuclear wastes that would constitute radiological warfare and have grave implications for the national security of all States. It requests the Conference on Disarmament to intensify efforts towards an early conclusion of a convention on the prohibition of radiological weapons, with radioactive wastes as part of the scope of such a convention.

The draft resolution takes note of the resolution adopted by the OAU Council of Ministers in 1991 on the Bamako Convention on the Ban on the Import of Hazardous Wastes into Africa and on the Control of their Transboundary Movements within Africa. It expresses the hope that the effective implementation of the IAEA Code of Practice on the International Transboundary Movement of Radioactive Waste will enhance the Protection of all States from the dumping of radioactive wastes on their territories. Finally, it appeals to all Member States that have not yet taken the necessary steps to become party to the Joint Convention on the Safety of Spent Fuel Management and on the Safety of Radioactive Waste Management to do so as soon as possible.

With the exception of technical updates, relating to the preambular paragraphs, the elements of the draft resolution are the same as the one adopted at the 55th session. The draft resolution had always been adopted without a vote both at the First Committee and by the General Assembly. The African Group would appreciate the cooperation of all delegations in adopting it without a vote again at this session.

I thank you, Mr. Chairman.