STATEMENT BY
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AMBASSADOR/DEPUTY PERMANENT REPRESENTATIVE OF NIGERIA
TO THE UNITED NATIONS
AT THE
GENERAL DEBATE OF THE FIRST COMMITTEE SESSION
OF THE 74TH UNITED NATIONS GENERAL ASSEMBLY

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Mr. Chairman,

The Delegation of Nigeria congratulates you on your election as Chairman of the First Committee at this Session, and we also con gratulate other members of the Bureau on their election. Our work will indeed benefit from your tremendous experience, expertise and commitment. We, therefore, assure you of our full support and cooperation. Let me also seize this opportunity to commend your predecessor, H.E. Mr. Ion Jinga, for his leadership and laudable efforts.

2. My delegation welcomes the remarks made by the President of the General Assembly and the High Representative for Disarmament Affairs. Nigeria aligns itself with the Statement of the Non-Aligned Movement and the African Group and wishes to make the following remarks.

Mr Chairman,

3. At the 73rd Session of the General Assembly, my Delegation joined other Member States to highlight the daunting challenges confronting our world. Sadly, little has so far changed to provide confidence and reduce the enormous challenges to global peace and security. This reality makes it even more urgent that we re-double our efforts and stridently work for global peace and security. In this regard, building the right momentum and multilateral approaches requires concerted efforts and a new plan of action.

4. In the context of threats to international peace and security, my Delegation continues to highlight the astronomical proportion of global defence budgets, including the enormous resources devoted to the
maintenance and upgrading of nuclear arsenal systems by nuclear weapons
states, as well as unfettered access to a wide-ranging collection of
conventional weapons by unauthorised non-state actors.

5. Today, the dangers and effects of uncontrolled access to conventional
weapons, including small arms and light weapons, are witnessed all around
us. From Africa to the Middle East, across Europe to the Americas and Asia,
the carnage has become phenomenal and unprecedented, particularly the
immense bloodshed foisted on innocent populations by terrorists and other
criminal elements. We have witnessed cities and communities destroyed,
including the heavy losses of precious lives, property, toll on livelihoods and
forced mass migration. In most cases, these mindless aggressions are largely
enabled and effectively supported by illicitly procured or transferred arms
by non-state entities. These are the weapons used indiscriminately by
terrorists and other bandits to unleash mayhem and massacre innocent
civilians, including women and children.

Mr Chairman,

6. The raison d'être for the overwhelming support and adoption of the
landmark ATT resolution on 2 April 2014 was the need to present a common
front to robustly respond to the threat posed to international peace and
security by the non-regulation of conventional weapons. In this regard, my
Delegation welcomes the outcome of the Third Conference of
States Parties to the Arms Trade Treaty held in August 2019, in Tokyo, Japan. We must do the needful, by standing with States Parties and other Signatories to this Treaty.

Mr Chairman,

7. 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 recalls the adoption of the landmark Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons, which opened for signature on the 20th September 2017. The delegation of Nigeria remains proud to have participated in the processes leading to its adoption, as well as being one of the first states to sign the treaty. Our commitment was guided by our principled position on the denuclearisation of the world.

8. We are also mindful of the catastrophic humanitarian consequences that could result from the deliberate or accidental use of nuclear weapons. To that end, my delegation calls on all states, particularly nuclear weapons states, to take into consideration the catastrophic humanitarian consequences of the use of these weapons on human health, the environment and vital economic resources among others, and to take necessary measures aimed at dismantling and renunciation of these weapons.

Mr. Chairman,
9. Nuclear test explosions not only send a tense signal to the global political environment, they also have devastating effects on our environment with the spread of radioactive materials to the atmosphere. We all owe a duty to protect the environment by respecting the moratorium against nuclear testing as we work assiduously to achieve the entry into force of the CTBT. In this regard, my Delegation welcomes the convening of the 11th Conference on Facilitating the Entry into Force of the CTBT held in New York on 25th September 2019 and, calls on those countries that have not signed or ratified the CTBT, particularly the Annex 2 states, to do so without further delay.

10. As a State Party to the Treaty of Pelindaba, Nigeria welcomes the establishment of Nuclear Weapon Free Zones (NWFZ) in many parts of the world. The Pelindaba 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.

Mr Chairman,

11. Member States of the Conference on Disarmament (CD) are again reminded of the need to reflect on whether the current impasse is serving the purposes and objective of its establishment. Notwithstanding the past consideration and actions taken by this body, there is no doubt that the long-
standing inability to agree to act on concrete issues has adversely affected the reputation and credibility of the CD. It was our hope that the Members of CD would hasten to do the needful and fulfill the objective for its establishment.

12. In spite of the difficulties encountered in the multilateral disarmament machinery, Nigeria remains committed to its objective, as the only measure put in place to advance the objectives of disarmament and international security. We remain hopeful that good judgment would prevail to ensure our understanding of the need to act concertedly and decisively to address these issues, which are of grave concern to humanity.

13. In the course of the Plenary Meetings, the delegation of Nigeria will submit three resolutions on behalf of the African Group for which we seek the full support of all delegations. These are: African Nuclear-Weapon-Free Zone Treaty, the United Nations Regional Centre for Peace and Disarmament in Africa, and the Prohibition of the Dumping of Radioactive Wastes.

I thank you.