FIRST SESSION OF THE PREPARATORY COMMITTEE FOR THE 2010 REVIEW CONFERENCE OF THE STATES PARTIES TO THE TREATY ON NON-PROLIFERATION OF NUCLEAR WEAPONS (NPT).

(VIENNA, 30 APRIL – 11 MAY, 2007).

STATEMENT BY

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Mr. Chairman,

At the very outset I should like to congratulate you, on behalf of the Nigeria delegation, on your election to the chair for this First Session of the Preparatory Committee meeting. My delegation has confidence in your ability to guide proceedings at this meeting to a successful conclusion. I should, therefore, very much like to assure you of the full cooperation and support of my delegation in the task ahead.

The Nigerian delegation associates itself with the statement made by Cuba on behalf of the Non-aligned Movement States Parties to the NPT.

Mr. Chairman,

The NPT was designed to prevent the spread of nuclear weapons, to enhance the goal of nuclear disarmament and general and complete disarmament, and to promote international cooperation in the peaceful uses of nuclear energy. Despite the enormous challenges it currently faces, the NPT remains a vital instrument for the promotion of global peace and security. For this reason, the Nigerian delegation reaffirms its commitment to the Treaty as the cornerstone of the non-proliferation regime and as an essential foundation for the achievement of nuclear disarmament.

Yes, indeed, a cornerstone stone and an essential foundation, but this notwithstanding, the immanent reality is that the NPT is fast becoming an eroding pillar of hope for global security that it used to be. The hard and difficult negotiations that have characterized our work at this PrepCom in the last few days testify to the gravity of these challenges and yet the paradox of the importance which we all attach to the NPT process.
For us, in Nigeria, both conceptually and politically the NPT is crucial, if not inevitable, for the sustainability of peace and security, prosperity and development of all nations. Therefore, success at this PrepCom is an objective we all must work hard to attain, in a manner that reassures the confidence of both nuclear and non-nuclear weapon states that the NPT is an adequate platform upon which to build our collective security.

While it would not be out of place to celebrate the near universal adherence to the Treaty it is, however, regrettable that the global endorsement and applicability of the NPT has yet to be matched, in equal measure, with strict compliance with the provisions of the Treaty by States Parties. My delegation believes that the implementation of the Treaty in its entirety is an obligation that must be assumed by ALL States Parties.

Yes, again, while it is true that, a measure of equal responsibility is assumed by both nuclear and non-nuclear weapon states in ensuring the full implementation of NPT obligations, it is arguable that greater and special responsibility lies with the nuclear weapon states, for "to whom much is given, much is expected". Regrettably though, the recurring decimal that we have witnessed has been one in which states, which have pledged nuclear disarmament, in fact go round to develop these weapons as if to taunt the non-nuclear weapon states about how smart they can be! This need not and should not be the case. In the same vein, non-nuclear weapon states, which defy their obligations, by whatever means they employ to disguise their nuclear intentions, must change their ways and rethink their actions.

Indeed, together, all States Parties should use this PrepCom to rededicate and recommit themselves to maintain a momentum to drastically reduce nuclear deployment and achieve nuclear
disarmament. We should resolve to desist from regarding nuclear weapons in fact as sufficient deterrent or an indispensable factor in our security calculations.

Let us not forget that so long as some States believe in the doctrine of nuclear weapons as deterrence so long will some other states continue to find it hard to resist the urge and temptation to possess such weapons. The point eloquently made by my South African colleague yesterday is worth restating here: "...one should not confuse nuclear arms reductions with nuclear disarmament, as a commitment to such reductions does not automatically translate into a commitment to nuclear disarmament and to a vision of a world free from nuclear weapons".

Mr. Chairman,

My delegation recalls that the 2000 NPT Review Conference resulted in the unanimous adoption of the "13 practical steps for the systematic and progressive efforts to achieve nuclear disarmament." Under this framework, NPT States parties declared their unequivocal undertaking to eliminate nuclear weapons, including a commitment to the application of the principles of verification and irreversibility to the reduction and elimination of nuclear weapons, reduction of the operational status of nuclear forces, and a diminishing role of nuclear weapons in security policies. We believe that if these measures are faithfully implemented, they would facilitate the realization of our goal of achieving a nuclear weapon free world. In this context the Nigerian delegation wishes to underscore the need to reaffirm and strengthen them at the 2010 Review Conference.

My delegation wishes to take this opportunity to reiterate its strong support for the comprehensive Nuclear Test Ban Treaty (CTBT). We wish to encourage states that are yet to ratify the Treaty, especially those whose ratification is necessary for its entry
into force, to do so as soon as possible to pave way for the entry into force of this very important international instrument.

At the moment, an increasing number of states have acquired the technology to produce fissile materials and nuclear explosive devices. This potentially dangerous state of affairs is the consequence of the continued possession of nuclear weapons by some states and the elevation, instead of a diminution, of the role of nuclear weapons in security policies by these same states. Against this backdrop, it has become urgent that we commence negotiations on a multilateral, non-discriminatory and effectively verifiable treaty banning the production of fissile materials. My delegation believes that such an immediate commencement would greatly help to advance the process of nuclear disarmament.

Mr. Chairman,

Non-nuclear weapon states have, over time, consistently called for the conclusion of a legally binding instrument, providing comprehensive and unconditional security guarantees against the use or threat of use of nuclear weapons against them. The 1995 Review and Extension Conference and the 2000 Review Conference had both underscored the importance of security assurances to non-nuclear weapon States Parties. Such Security guarantees represent a legitimate aspiration of non-nuclear weapon states. Indeed, these security guarantees, if provided, can contribute positively to addressing some of the dangers inherent in the unwanted presence of nuclear weapons in our world today.

My delegation believes that for such a security guarantee to be effective and lasting, it would have to be balanced and non-discriminatory. Furthermore, it should seek to provide security for all through total nuclear disarmament within a time-bound framework. In this regard, the Nigerian delegation would like to see the
commencement of negotiations, as a matter of priority, in the conference on Disarmament prohibiting the use or threat of use of nuclear weapons under any circumstance, including negotiations toward the complete elimination of nuclear weapons.

I thank you.