STATEMENT

BY

HER EXCELLENCY,
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AMBASSADOR/PERMANENT REPRESENTATIVE
OF NIGERIA TO THE IAEA

AT

THE THIRD PREPARATORY COMMITTEE MEETING
(PREPCOM) OF THE 2020 REVIEW CONFERENCE OF THE
PARTIES TO THE TREATY ON THE NON-PROLIFERATION OF
NUCLEAR WEAPONS
CLUSTER I
Disarmament and Security Assurances

NIGERIA, 29 APRIL – 10 MAY 2019

Please check against delivery
Mr Chairman,

Let me begin by expressing the appreciation of my delegation for your efforts and able leadership and to further assure you and the Bureau of our continued cooperation and support. The delegation of Nigeria aligns itself with the Statements delivered on behalf of the Non-Aligned Movement, the African Group and the De-alerting Group.

Mr Chairman,

2. The continued existence of nuclear weapons remain an existential threat to all humankind. The cost of maintenance and modernisation 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 and peaceful development of societies.

3. Nigeria underscores its concern over the slow pace of progress by nuclear-weapon States to accomplish the total elimination of their nuclear arsenals, in accordance with their legal obligations and undertakings under Article VI of the Non-Proliferation Treaty. In this regard, we stress that the continued vitality of the Non-Proliferation Treaty is dependent upon strict compliance and progress with its three pillars: disarmament, non-proliferation and peaceful uses of nuclear energy.

4. As preparations for the 10th NPT Review Conference have begun with the First PrepCom held in 2017 and the Second PrepCom in 2018, and this Third Session, my delegation calls on all States to work towards the actualisation of the goals and objectives of the Treaty and the previously agreed outcomes of its Review Conference in particular, the 1995 and 2010 outcome documents.

Mr Chairman,

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.
Mr Chairman,

6. My delegation reiterates the catastrophic humanitarian consequences that could result from either a deliberate use and/or unintentional explosion of nuclear weapons. It is in this light that Nigeria 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.

7. Nuclear weapons 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 recalls the adoption of the landmark 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 it. Our commitment was guided by Nigeria's principled position on the denuclearisation of the world.

8. In Africa, we have long acknowledged the existential threat posed to human existence by nuclear tests. It was to this end that African countries collectively adopted the Pelindaba Treaty renouncing the utilisation of nuclear technology for military purposes, as well as declaring Africa as a nuclear-weapons-free zone to serve as a shield for the African territory, by, inter-alia, preventing the stationing of nuclear explosive devices on the continent and prohibiting the testing of those weapons in the entire space that constitutes the African continent.
Mr Chairman,

9. Nigeria welcomes the continued efforts by the IAEA, particularly its role in monitoring and verification of nuclear facilities. We urge States to ensure observance and compliance with IAEA safeguards and standards at all times. States must equally be alive to responsibilities on compliance and adherence to other measures, including the Nuclear-Non Proliferation Treaty (NPT), the cornerstone for deepening the global non-proliferation regime and other mechanisms committed to promoting nuclear disarmament and non-proliferation, such as the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty (CTBT) and full commitment to the Conference on Disarmament by its Members.

Mr. Chairman,

10. In conclusion, as we continue working towards achieving a nuclear weapons free world, we call on all nuclear weapon states to provide unconditional negative security assurances to non-nuclear-weapon states.

I thank you.