STATEMENT DELIVERED

BY

TIJJANI MUHAMMAD-BANDE
AMBASSADOR/PERMANENT REPRESENTATIVE OF THE FEDERAL REPUBLIC OF NIGERIA TO THE UNITED NATIONS

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FIRST COMMITTEE GENERAL DEBATE ON ALL THE DISARMAMENT AND INTERNATIONAL SECURITY AGENDA ITEMS

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Mr. Chairman,

The Delegation of Nigeria congratulates you on your election as Chairman of the First Committee at this 76th Session and the other members of the bureau on their election. We assure you of our full support and cooperation. We have no doubt that our work will benefit from your experience and commitment.

2. Nigeria aligns itself with the Statement of the Non-Aligned Movement and the African Group and wishes to make the following remarks in its national capacity.

Mr. Chairman,

3. At the last 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.

4. 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. A sizeable number of the global population, including in my country, has experienced the painful consequences of illicit trade, transfer and circulations of small arms and light
weapons in the hands of criminal gangs, terrorists, armed bandits and militants.

Mr. Chairman,
5. My Delegation remains deeply concerned over a wide range of consequences from the illicit small arms and light weapons (SALW). We therefore, calls on all states, in particular major producing States, to ensure that supply of SALW is restricted only to governments or to entities duly authorized by them. We have witnessed cities and communities destroyed, including the heavy losses of precious lives, property, toll on livelihoods and forced mass migration.

Mr. Chairman
6. My delegation remains committed to the UN Programme of Action (UN PoA) to Prevent, Combat and Eradicate the Illicit Trade in Small Arms and Light Weapons (SALW) in All Its Aspects. Nigeria supported the adoption of the landmark Arms Trade Treaty (ATT) resolution on 2 April 2014. My delegation also underscores 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 order to mitigate their proliferation, Nigeria has redoubled efforts at strengthening its borders, while strengthening its cooperation across the West African sub-region and beyond. Our commitment is further demonstrated by the signing and ratification of relevant international, regional and sub-regional instruments such as the ATT and the UNPoA, as well as establishing and sustaining robust partnerships with the AU, the UN Regional
Centre for Peace and Disarmament in Africa and other relevant organisations.

7. In addition, a National Centre for the Control of Small Arms and Light Weapons (NCCSALW) has been set up by the Federal Government of Nigeria. The Centre has been involved in activities geared towards stemming the tide of the proliferation of SALWs. It has organized capacity building programmes for security agencies, and carried out an initial baseline assessment of the SALWs situation in Nigeria, including a comprehensive national survey on small arms and light weapons, comprehensive national weapons marking programme, the establishment of database on SALWs, and a review of Nigeria's firearms law, among other things. It has also established a framework for collaboration with the civil society organizations in order to sustain wider stakeholder participation.

Mr. Chairman

8. Nigeria continues to support and advance the cause of regional and sub-regional initiatives such as the Bamako Declaration (2000), the AU Constitutive Act and the Protocol on the Establishment of the Peace and Security Council of the AU (2002), the Solemn Declaration on a Common African Defence and Security Policy in Sirte, in 2004, the ECOWAS Convention (2006), the African Union Agenda 2063, the Initiative of Silencing the Guns in Africa, and other relevant initiatives aimed at addressing the threat of the illicit flows of SALW in Africa.

Mr. Chairman
9. My Delegation reiterates continued concern over the current difficult and complex situation in the field of disarmament and international security. In this regard, Nigeria calls for renewed efforts to resolve the current impasse in achieving nuclear disarmament and nuclear non-proliferation in all its aspects. My delegation expresses concern at the increasing global military expenditure, which could otherwise be spent on development needs, poverty eradication and the elimination of the diseases that afflict humanity, including the COVID-19 pandemic.

10. Nigeria further reaffirms its position on nuclear disarmament, which remains the agreed highest priority for the UN in the area of disarmament in accordance with the Final Document of SSOD-I. Nigeria is deeply concerned by the non-compliance by Nuclear-Weapons States and the threats that pose to the non-proliferation regime and international architecture of security.

Mr. Chairman,

11. Nuclear weapons represent a grave existential threat to humanity. Nigeria, therefore, underscores the importance of resolution [70/34], as an integral part of the multilateral disarmament effort.

12. My Delegation is 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, as well as, to take necessary measures aimed at dismantling and renunciation of their nuclear weapons.

Mr. Chairman,

13. 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. It is in this context that Nigeria strongly supports all efforts aimed at the total elimination and de-legitimisation of nuclear weapons as the utmost prerequisite for maintaining international peace and security. In this spirit, my delegation recalls the historical entry into force of the Landmark Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons (TPNW) on 22nd January 2021. Nigeria remains proud to have participated in the processes leading to its adoption, as well as being one of the first states to sign and ratify the treaty.

Mr. Chairman,

14. The failure of the 9th Review Conference in 2015, despite the intensive efforts of Non-Nuclear-Weapon States, especially from Africa, requires the positive engagement as States Parties prepare for the 10th NPT Review Conference. My delegation calls on all States Parties to the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty to work towards preserving the credibility and sustainability of the Treaty and achieving its universality and objectives through the adoption of a balanced and comprehensive outcome document.

15. The setback of the last review conference remains fresh in our
minds. It is, therefore, hoped that the disappointment would serve as a clear reminder of the need to renew commitments to the overall objective of the NPT.

Mr. Chairman,

16. The Delegation of Nigeria underscores the importance of the continued respect of the inalienable right to peaceful uses of nuclear energy and stresses the central role of the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) in ensuring the commitment of States to the implementation of Safeguards Agreements, as well as in the provision and promotion of technical assistance and cooperation through maximizing the use of science and technology for socio-economic development.

17. As a State Party to the African Nuclear-Weapon-Free Zone Treaty, the Treaty of Pelindaba which has celebrated its tenth anniversary in July 2019, Nigeria re-affirms the status of Africa as a Nuclear-Weapon-Free Zone.

18. To ensure a world free from the fear or possibility of the use of nuclear weapons, my Delegation further re-affirms the central role of Nuclear-Weapon-Free Zones in the consolidation of the NPT, as well as in their contributions to addressing nuclear disarmament and non-proliferation across all regions of the world. They enhance global and regional peace and security, strengthen the nuclear non-proliferation regime and contribute towards realising the objectives of nuclear disarmament. My delegation, therefore, 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,

19. We all owe a duty to protect the environment by respecting the moratorium against nuclear testing as we work assiduously in achieving universal adherence to the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty. In this regard, my Delegation underscores the 25th Anniversary of the opening for signature of the CTBT and stresses the importance of achieving its universal adherence, taking into consideration the special responsibilities of Nuclear-Weapons States. My delegation believes that the CTBT offers hope of halting further the development and proliferation of nuclear weapons, thereby contributing to the goal of nuclear disarmament. My delegation calls on Nuclear-Weapon States and those yet to accede to the NPT, which are listed in Annex 2 of the Treaty and have not yet signed and ratified the CTBT, to do so without further delay.

Mr. Chairman,

20. The Delegation of Nigeria underscores the importance of the United Nations Disarmament Commission (UNDC) and regrets that consensus was not reached on the agenda item on nuclear disarmament for several years. 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 actconcertedly and decisively to address these issues, which are of grave concern to humanity.

Mr. Chairman,
21. My Delegation re-affirms the importance of the prevention of an arms race in outer space through a legally binding instrument that would complement the international legal framework in a manner that allows for the equal exploration of the outer space based on the principles of non-appropriation and peaceful uses of outer space in conformity with the five United Nations Treaties governing space activities.

22. The Delegation of Nigeria therefore, strongly supports the central leading role by the United Nations in promoting and developing rules and principles for the responsible use of Information and Telecommunication Technologies (ITCs) by States through collaborative, inclusive and equitable process. My Delegation considers that it is imperative to maintain trust and security in the digital environment.

Mr. Chairman,

23. In the course of the Plenary Meetings, my Delegation will submit three resolutions on behalf of the African Group for which we seek the full support of all delegations. These three resolutions which have been subject to the necessary technical and factual updates are:

i. The African Nuclear-Weapon-Free Zone Treaty,

ii. Prohibition of the Dumping of the Radioactive Wastes, and

iii. The United Nations Regional Centre for Peace and Disarmament in Africa
24. I thank you for your attention.