

STATEMENT DELIVERED

BY

MUHAMMAD ZAYYANU BANDIYA
MINISTER COUNSELLOR, FIRST COMMITTEE
PERMANENT MISSION OF THE FEDERAL REPUBLIC OF NIGERIA

AT THE 76TH SESSION OF THE UNITED NATIONS GENERAL ASSEMBLY

FIRST COMMITTEE THEMATIC DISCUSSIONS ON NUCLEAR WEAPONS,
OTHER WEAPONS OF MASS DESTRUCTION, OUTER SPACE, AND
CONVENTIONAL WEAPONS

NEW YORK, TUESDAY, 12TH OCTOBER 2021

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Mr. Chairman,

The Delegation of 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.

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

3. My delegation expresses concern at the increasing global military expenditure, which could otherwise be spent on developmental needs, poverty eradication and the elimination of the diseases that afflict humanity, including the COVID-19 pandemic.

Mr. Chairman,

4. My Delegation reaffirms its continued concern over the current difficult and complex situation in the field of disarmament and international security. Nigeria calls for renewed efforts to resolve the current impasse in achieving nuclear disarmament and nuclear non-proliferation in all its aspects.

5. Nigeria further reaffirms its position on nuclear disarmament which remains the agreed highest priority for the UN, the African Group and my Country. We are 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.

6. In this regard, Nigeria welcomes the entry into force of the Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons on 22 January 2021 and reiterates that the Treaty would contribute to furthering the global objective of the total elimination of nuclear weapons. We therefore, look forward to the first meeting of the States parties to the Treaty scheduled to hold in March 2022.

Mr. Chairman,

7. The exploration and use of outer space and other celestial bodies shall be for peaceful purposes and shall be carried out for the benefit and in the interest of all countries, irrespective of their degree of economic or scientific development.

8. Nigeria reaffirms its support for the prevention of an arms race in outer space. We also support the legitimate concerns that existing legal instruments are inadequate to deter further militarisation of outer space or prevent its weaponisation.

9. My delegation further stresses the need to consolidate and reinforce existing regimes and enhance their effectiveness through the creation of a legally binding treaty on the prevention of an arms race in outer space.

Mr. Chairman,

10. 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.

11. 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,

12. 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.

13. Nigeria 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.

14. My delegation 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.

15. 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.

16. 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.

Mr. Chairman,

17. My Country 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.

18. 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,

19. My Delegation note with satisfaction the effective operation of the Convention on the Prohibition of the Development, Production, Stockpiling and Use of Chemical Weapons (CWC), as the only comprehensive multilateral treaty banning an entire category of Weapons of Mass Destructions, providing for a verification system and promoting the use of chemicals for peaceful purposes.

20. My Delegation also considers that the Biological Weapons Convention represents an important component of the international legal architecture related to Weapons of Mass Destructions.

21. I thank you for your attention.