



STATEMENT ON BEHALF OF THE AFRICAN GROUP

BY

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AT

THE 77<sup>TH</sup> SESSION OF THE UNITED NATIONS GENERAL ASSEMBLY

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

NEW YORK, 3RD OCTOBER 2022

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**Mr. Chairman,**

1. I have the honour to speak on behalf of the African Group. I congratulate you on your election as Chairman of the First Committee at this 77<sup>th</sup> Session. I also congratulate the other members of the bureau on their election. I assure you of the African Group's support and cooperation.
2. The African Group aligns itself with the Statement delivered by the Representative of Indonesia on behalf of the Non-Aligned Movement and wishes to make the following remarks.
3. This General Debate takes place at a time when the disarmament and non-proliferation regime is eroding. International security continues to deteriorate, as the world faces immense challenges to peace and security.
4. In this regard, the African Group underscores the absolute validity of multilateral diplomacy to address disarmament, non-proliferation and international security in accordance with the principles and objectives enshrined in the UN Charter and the First Special Session on Disarmament (SSOD-I). The Group restates that there are no substitutes for a constructive multilateral approach to addressing global disarmament issues.
5. Nuclear weapons represent a grave existential threat to humanity and if nuclear-weapon States continue to possess and modernise these weapons of mass destruction, our collective security cannot be assured. The Group, therefore, welcomes and



underscores the importance of the resolution 70/34 as an integral part of the multilateral disarmament effort.

6. It is, therefore, time to continue to raise our voices against the slow pace and the lack of good faith and commitment on the part of nuclear-weapon States to dismantle their nuclear weapons.

**Mr. Chairman,**

7. The African Group is deeply disappointed at yet another failed Review Conference of the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty (NPT) that could not agree to any tangible progress on the implementation of agreed commitments. Having one failed Review Conference is bad enough. Having two failed review conferences back-to-back plunges the NPT into uncharted waters and places the credibility and sustainability of the Treaty in deep trouble, placing our collective peace and security in jeopardy.

~~Mr. Chairman~~

8. The African Group 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.

9. In this context, the African Group remains committed to the Treaty of Pelindaba, re-affirming the status of Africa as a nuclear-weapon-free zone and providing a shield for the African territory. In addition, it prohibits either the stationing of nuclear explosive devices on the continent or testing of those weapons on the entire space that constitutes the African continent.



10. The African Group reiterates its deep concern regarding the lack of implementation of the commitments and obligations of the 1995 NPT Review Conference Resolution on the Middle East regarding the establishment of a zone free of nuclear weapons and all other weapons of mass destruction.

11. In the same vein, the Group recalls the convening of the United Nations Conference on the establishment of a Middle East zone free of nuclear weapons and other weapons of mass destruction pursuant to UNGA Decision 73/546. We welcome the convening of the First Session under the presidency of Hashemite Kingdom of Jordan and the Second Session under the presidency of the State of Kuwait. The African Group calls on all invited Parties to constructively continue to engage in good faith in order to negotiate a legally binding treaty that satisfies the implementation of the 1995 resolution on the Middle East.

**Mr. Chairman,**

12. The African Group 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 continuing to ensure the commitment of States to the implementation of Safeguards Agreements and in the provision and promotion of technical support and cooperation, as well as maximizing the use of science and technology for socio-economic development.



13. The African Group emphasises the humanitarian considerations in the context of all deliberations on nuclear weapons at this session, particularly, the catastrophic humanitarian consequences of the use or detonation of nuclear weapons, either by accident or as a deliberate action. The Group notes the strides made by States and continues to call on all States, especially nuclear-weapon States, to have in their 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 take necessary measures and steps to ensure the dismantling and renunciation of these weapons.

**Mr. Chairman,**

14. The total elimination of nuclear weapons remains the only absolute guarantee against their use or threat of use. In this context, the Group reiterates the urgent need for our planet to be free of nuclear weapons, as their presence constitutes a grave threat to international peace and security and an existential threat to humanity.

15. Africa supports the objective of complete nuclear disarmament, as the utmost prerequisite for maintaining international peace and security. It is in this spirit that the African Group recalls the historical entry into force of the Landmark Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons (TPNW) on 22 January 2021.

16. The Group reaffirms its full support to the adoption of the Declaration of the First Meeting of States Parties to the Treaty on the



Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons entitled, "Our commitment to a world free of nuclear weapons", which reaffirmed the determination to realize the complete elimination of nuclear weapons.

17. The Group also reaffirms its support for the Vienna Action Plan adopted during the First Meeting of the States Parties to the Treaty held in Vienna, from 21-23 July 2022 to facilitate effective and timely implementation of the TPNW and its objectives and goals.

18. In this regard, the Group wishes to urge all members of the international community, especially nuclear weapon States and those under the so-called "nuclear umbrella", to seize the opportunity to sign and ratify the Treaty at an early date and to pursue the goal of a nuclear-weapons-free world.

19. The continued existence and possession of nuclear weapons does not guarantee security; it is an affirmation of the risks of their potential use. Our world, including the outer space, must be free of nuclear weapons and other weapons of mass destruction. It is in this context that the Group stresses the need for the nuclear weapons States to cease their further modernisation, upgrading, refurbishment or extending the lives of their nuclear weapons and related facilities.

**Mr. Chairman,**

20. The African Group wishes to reiterate the importance of achieving universal adherence to the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty (CTBT), taking into account the special responsibilities of Nuclear Weapons States. The Group believes that the CTBT offers hope of halting further modernization and development or vertical



and horizontal proliferation of nuclear weapons, thereby contributing to the goal of nuclear disarmament.

21. The Group calls on the international community to renew its support for promoting the entry into force of the CTBT. The Group calls on all States particularly the remaining eight States listed in Annex 2 that have yet to ratify the CTBT to do so, taking into consideration the special responsibility of nuclear-weapon States as stipulated in Action 10 of the 2010 Action Plan.

~~Mr. Chairman,~~

22. The African Group reemphasizes the urgent need for the commencement of substantive work in the Conference on Disarmament (CD), inter alia, on the prevention of an arms race in outer space.

23. The African Group underscores the great importance of the United Nations Disarmament Commission (UNDC). The Group welcomes the convening of the 2022 Session of the UNDC held in April 2022 under the Chairmanship of South Africa.

**Mr. Chairman,**

24. The African Group remains deeply concerned over the illicit trade, transfer, manufacture, possession and circulation of small arms and light weapons, their excessive accumulation and uncontrolled spread in many regions of the world, particularly on the continent of Africa. The Group remains committed to the implementation of the UN Programme of Action (UN PoA) to Prevent, Combat and Eradicate the Illicit Trade in Small Arms and Light



Weapons (SALWs) in All Its Aspects and welcomes the successful outcome of the Eighth Biennial Meeting of States (BMS8) held from 27 June to 1 July 2022 in New York.

25. The African Group acknowledges the efforts by States Parties to the Arms Trade Treaty (ATT) since its entry into force, as well as the Eighth Conference of the States Parties (CSP8) to the Treaty held from 22 to 26 August 2022 in Geneva. The Group urges States Parties to the Treaty to implement it in a balanced and objective manner, that protects the interests of all States and not just the major international arms producing and exporting States. The Group reaffirms the sovereign right of States to acquire, manufacture, export, import and retain conventional arms, their parts and components for their security needs in accordance with the UN Charter.

**Mr. Chairman,**

26. The Group welcomes the undertaking by the Regional Centre to deepen its partnership with the African Union Commission and African sub-regional organisations within the context of the United Nations-African Union Framework for enhanced partnership in Peace and Security. The Centre needs assistance in furthering and delivering its mandate, and the Group wishes to seize this opportunity to call for further assistance to bolster its efforts and ensure that the Centre continues with this momentum to deliver on its mandate.



**Mr. Chairman,**

27. The African Group welcomes the progress made in the context of the Open-Ended-Working-Group on security of and in the use of Information Communication Technologies 2021-2025. The Group also recalls the third substantive session of the OEWG, concluded on 29 July 2022 and welcomes the adoption by consensus of the First Annual Progress Report the latter which has been issued as document A/77/275 (annex) dated 8 August 2022.

28. The Group stresses the importance of the prevention of an arms race in outer space through a legally binding instrument that would complement the international legal framework.

29. The full text of this statement will be circulated through the e-statements portal.

30. I thank you for your attention.