

STATEMENT
ON BEHALF OF THE AFRICAN GROUP

BY

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UNITED NATIONS DISARMAMENT COMMISSION

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Mr. Chair,

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.

2. Permit me to congratulate you on your election as Chair of this substantive session of the Commission, as well as the Vice-Chairs and Chairs of the Working Groups on their assumption. Mr. Chair, you and your Bureau members can be assured of the Group's full support and cooperation.

3. Africa Group is deeply convinced of the importance of multilateral diplomacy in the field of disarmament and non-proliferation. We reaffirm the significance of the UNDC, as the sole deliberative body within the United Nations multilateral disarmament machinery, to consider specific disarmament issues and submit concrete recommendations to the General Assembly. Our commitment anchors towards strengthening UN disarmament machinery and promotion of multilateralism at large.

4. While Africa Group commends the adoption of the "Recommendations to promote the practical implementation of TCBM in outer space activities with the goal of preventing arms race in outer space in line with the recommendations set out in the report of the GGE on this issue" in the 2023

Substantive Session of the UNDC, it is quite unfortunate that at the end of its three years cycle in 2023, the UNDC was still unable to reach agreement on the other very important agenda item “*Recommendations for achieving the objective of nuclear disarmament and non-proliferation of nuclear weapons*”.

5. In this regard, the Group wishes to stress the importance of reaching consensus and attaining concrete results in this current cycle of UNDC. To this effect, the Group calls on all Member States, especially the Nuclear Weapon States (NWS), to show the required political will and flexibility in ensuring a successful outcome of this process.

Mr. Chair,

6. Africa Group reiterates its deep concern over the lack of commitment and progress in the implementation of nuclear disarmament obligations and commitments by the NWS to accomplish the total elimination of their nuclear arsenals in accordance with their relevant international legal obligations. The Group reiterates the importance of the unanimous conclusion of the ICJ that there exists an obligation to pursue in good faith and to bring to a conclusion negotiation leading to nuclear disarmament in all its aspects under strict and effective international control. The Group, therefore, calls on the NWS to fulfil their multilateral legal obligations on nuclear disarmament

and to implement the unequivocal undertaking they provided in 2000, and further reiterated in 2010, so as to accomplish the total elimination of nuclear weapons. The Group further reaffirms the need for critical concrete actions by the NWS to achieve a world free of nuclear weapons. The only guarantee against the use of nuclear weapons is their total elimination. We are deeply concerned about the threat to humanity posed by the continued existence of nuclear weapons and of their possible use, testing or threat of use, including the associated horrifying humanitarian and environmental consequences.

7. There is an urgent need for accountability of NWS for their disarmament obligations under the NPT through benchmarks, concrete, measurable, and timebound actions on nuclear disarmament with established deadlines, and reporting their implementation of these obligations to the NPT Review Conference under the 1st pillar in a structured manner that allows NNWS to engage constructively on their reports. These reports must also contain comparable information including, inter alia, the number, type, and status of nuclear warheads, the number and types of delivery vehicles, the amount/stock of fissile materials produced for military purposes, and measures taken to reduce the role and significance of nuclear weapons.

8. The Group emphasizes that progress on nuclear disarmament and nuclear non-proliferation, in all its aspects, is essential in strengthening international peace and security. To

this end, the Group stresses that nuclear disarmament, as the highest priority established by SSOD-I and as a multilateral legal obligation, should not be made conditional on, non-proliferation efforts or so-called strategic stability, or to introduce confidence building and risk reduction measures as substitute for the total elimination of nuclear weapons.

9. The Group reaffirms its positions on nuclear disarmament, which remains its highest priority. The Group wishes to stress that efforts aimed at nuclear non-proliferation are similar to efforts aimed at nuclear disarmament. While the Group calls for promotion of international cooperation in support of enabling the access to the inalienable right to develop research, production and uses of nuclear energy for peaceful purposes without discrimination. The access of the States Parties to their inalienable right to peaceful uses should not be subject to restrictions or obstacles including by using pretexts of non-proliferation and nuclear safety and security.

10. Africa Group underscores the importance of the General Assembly resolution 68/32 and its most recent version, resolution 79/47, entitled "Follow-up to the 2013 High-level Meeting of the General Assembly on Nuclear Disarmament" which provides a concrete roadmap to achieve the objective of nuclear disarmament through the urgent commencement of negotiations in the Conference on Disarmament for the early

conclusion of a comprehensive convention on nuclear weapons.

11. Africa Group calls for an early conclusion of a universal, unconditional, irrevocable, non-discriminatory and legally binding instrument to effectively assure all non-nuclear-weapon States against the use or threat of use of nuclear weapons under any circumstances as a matter of urgency, pending the achievement of the total elimination of nuclear weapons, which remains the only absolute guarantee against their use or threat of use.

Mr. Chair,

12. The African Group wishes to reiterate the importance of achieving to the universality of the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty (CTBT), taking into consideration 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.

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

which prohibits but is not limited to, the development, testing manufacture, acquisition, possession or stockpiling of nuclear weapons or other nuclear explosive devices. The Treaty also expressly prohibits any stationing, installation or deployment of any nuclear weapons or other nuclear explosive devices in the territory or jurisdiction of its States Parties.

14. The Group reaffirms its full support to the adoption of the Declaration of the First three Meetings of States Parties to the Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons (TPNW) and welcomes the Third Meeting of the States Parties which was recently held from 03rd to 07th March 2025, in New York, as well as looking forward to its first review Conference under the Presidency of South Africa.

15. The Group reaffirms the importance of the application, by NWS, of principles of transparency, irreversibility and international verifiability in all measures related to the fulfilment of their nuclear disarmament obligations and undertakings.

Mr. Chair,

16. 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 this regard, through its continued technical support and cooperation, as well as maximizing the use of science and technology for socio-

economic development, including the 2030 sustainable development agenda.

17. Similarly, the Group stresses that proliferation concerns are best addressed through multilaterally negotiated, universal, comprehensive and non-discriminatory agreements. Non-proliferation control arrangements should be transparent and open to participation by all States, and should not impose restrictions on access to material, equipment and technology for peaceful purposes required by developing countries. The Group further stresses that the issues related to proliferation should be resolved through political and diplomatic means. It also noted that measures and initiatives taken in this regard should be within the framework of international law aimed at promoting international peace and security.

18. We, the African Group, state our disappointment on the unprecedented consecutive failure of the 9th and the 10th Review conference of Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty (NPT). The recurrent impasses during NPT Review Conferences are eroding the credibility of the treaty, with possible dire consequences on humanity and the environment.

19. We call on all NPT States Parties to show genuine determination and work together pragmatically to achieve positive results at the 2026 RevCon meeting. Ghana's leadership role in the upcoming Third PrepCom session (2025)

marks a crucial opportunity to establish shared understanding before the main conference, namely by approaching our discussions openly and with serious commitment. We cannot overstate what hangs in the balance, as our collective framework for controlling nuclear weapons and maintaining worldwide stability rests on whether we can reinforce, not weaken, this fundamental agreement.

20. The African Group re-affirms the central role of nuclear-weapons-free zones in the consolidation of the NPT, as well as its significance in addressing nuclear disarmament and non-proliferation across all regions of the world. In this context, the African Group remains committed to the Treaty of Pelindaba, re-affirming the status of Africa as a nuclear-weapons-free zone, banning the stationing and testing of nuclear explosive devices in the entire African territory.

21. The African Group reiterates its deep concern over non-implementation of the commitments and obligations of the 1995 NPT Review Conference Resolution on the Middle East and several UNSC and UNGA resolutions regarding the establishment of a zone free of nuclear weapons and all other weapons of mass destruction.

22. Similarly, 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. The Group acknowledges the progress achieved thus far at the five sessions that the Conference convened including most recently under Mauritania's presidency in November 2024.

Mr. Chair,

23. The Group reiterates its call on the CD, which is the sole multilateral disarmament negotiating body, to agree as soon as possible, on a balanced and comprehensive program of work without any further delay in order for it to overcome its long-standing deadlock and to start its substantive work on the four core issues on its agenda. In this regard, we, the Africa Group, call for the urgent commencement of negotiations in the CD for the early conclusion of a comprehensive convention on nuclear weapons.

24. The Africa Group is deeply concerned about the negative security consequences of the deployment of strategic missile defence systems, or any similar device that could trigger an arms race(s) and lead to the further development of advanced missile systems and an increase in the number of nuclear weapons.

25.- As for WG II, The African Group underscores that the scope of application of new and emerging technologies is of particular importance and impact on international peace and security, particularly in a number of strategic domains

including, inter alia, the use of information and communication technologies (ICTs), the military applications of Artificial Intelligence, and in the area of Lethal Autonomous Weapons.

26. Accordingly, it's imperative for the UNDC to approach these issues in a comprehensive manner that deals with the risks and challenges they pose, and at the same time, harnesses its potential benefits, while basing the discussions on the purposes and principles of the UN charter, and in a manner that promotes the full compliance with international law, including international humanitarian law, and sufficiently invests in international cooperation efforts including on capacity building, technology transfer, with the aim of bridging the digital divide.

27. In conclusion, Mr. Chair, the Group wishes to reiterate its full support for the UNDC work, which must be tailored towards bolstering political will and flexibility in order to achieve consensus as well as concrete outcomes to advance global disarmament and non-proliferation.

28. Thank you, Mr. Chair.