

**STATEMENT DELIVERED  
ON BEHALF OF THE AFRICAN GROUP**

**BY**

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TO THE UNITED NATIONS**

**AT THE 2026 SUBSTANTIVE SESSION OF THE UNITED NATIONS  
DISARMAMENT COMMISSION**

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Mr. Chair,

1. 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. At the outset, allow me to congratulate you on your election as Chair of this substantive session of the Commission, as well as the members of your Bureau and Chairs of the Working Groups. Chair, you and your Bureau members can be assured of the Group's full support and cooperation.

3. The African Group remains steadfastly convinced that multilateral diplomacy, conducted in good faith and in accordance with the purposes and principles of the United Nations Charter, constitutes the only sustainable pathway to maintain the global disarmament and non-proliferation architecture. At a moment when the architecture of multilateral security cooperation faces exceptional strain, we reaffirm the singular and irreplaceable significance of the United Nations Disarmament Commission (UNDC) as the sole deliberative body within the United Nations disarmament machinery with universal membership. We call, with renewed urgency, for the strengthening of its institutional authority and for the full and timely implementation of its mandate by submitting recommendations on issues considered by the two respective Working Groups.

4. While the African Group commends the adoption of the Recommendations on transparency and confidence-building measures in outer space activities at the 2023 Substantive Session of the UNDC, it notes with deep concern and profound disappointment that the current 2024-2026 cycle has yet to produce commensurate progress on the equally critical agenda item concerning nuclear disarmament recommendations. The Group firmly reminds that the credibility of this Commission — and of the broader multilateral disarmament architecture — rests upon the ability of its members to rise above political differences and discharge their shared obligations with seriousness of purpose.

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, and bearing in mind the imminent date of convening the upcoming Review Conference of the NPT, the Group calls on all Member States, especially the Nuclear Weapon States (NWS) to show the required political will and flexibility in ensuring progress a successful outcome of this process.

Chair,

6. The African 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 and political commitments. The Group reiterates the importance of the

International Court of Justice advisory opinion 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, including in follow up to the NPT 2010 64-points Action Plan by the NWS to achieve a world free of nuclear weapons. The only guarantee against the use of nuclear weapons is their total elimination.

7. The African Group is profoundly alarmed by the erosion of the norms against the use or threat of use of nuclear weapons and the resurgence of nuclear rhetoric as an instrument of political coercion in the context of ongoing armed conflicts. Any threat of use of nuclear weapons — whether explicit or implied — constitutes a grave violation of the spirit of the United Nations Charter, the letter of the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT), and the fundamental norms of international humanitarian law. We further remind all Member States that the catastrophic and irreversible humanitarian and environmental consequences of any use of nuclear weapons render such use incompatible with the rules and principles of international law, as affirmed by the International Court of Justice. The Group calls upon all nuclear weapon States to exercise the utmost restraint, to reaffirm unconditional commitments to no-first-

use, and to resume substantive dialogue on risk reduction measures, while reiterating that such measures are not a substitute to nuclear disarmament.

8. The African Group underlines the urgent need to establish a robust, transparent and institutionally anchored accountability framework for the fulfilment by Nuclear-Weapon States of their disarmament obligations under Article VI of the NPT and the decisions and outcomes of the 1995, 2000 and 2010 Review Conferences. In the particular context of the forthcoming 2026 NPT Review Conference, the Group calls upon each NWS to submit, in advance of the Review Conference and in a standardized, comparable format, comprehensive national implementation reports including, at minimum: (i) updated warhead inventories by type and operational status; (ii) fissile material stockpiles produced for military purposes; (iii) categories and numbers of delivery vehicles; and (iv) specific, time-bound steps taken since 2022 toward the fulfilment of Article VI commitments.

9. The African Group reaffirms that nuclear disarmament — as the highest priority established by the the First Special Session of the General Assembly dedicated to Disarmament (SSOD-I) and as a binding multilateral legal obligation — must not be made conditional upon non-proliferation performance, bilateral strategic stability arrangements, or unilateral security doctrines. The Group is deeply troubled by the continued and accelerating modernization of nuclear arsenals, the development of new categories of nuclear

testing as well as categories of nuclear delivery systems — including hypersonic glide vehicles and low-yield warheads — and the allocation of resources, estimated in trillions of dollars, to nuclear weapons programmes. Such expenditure stands in stark and irreconcilable contradiction with Article VI obligations and the goal of a world free of nuclear weapons with the pressing demands of sustainable development. The Group calls upon all States to redirect those resources, progressively and verifiably, toward the implementation of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development.

10. The Group reaffirms its position on nuclear disarmament, which remains its highest priority. The Group wishes to stress that efforts aimed at nuclear disarmament must be accorded the same level of attention and support given to nuclear non-proliferation. While the Group calls for promotion of international cooperation in support of ensuring 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 discrimination, restrictions or obstacles including by using pretexts of nonproliferation and nuclear safety and security.

11. The Africa Group underscores the importance of the General Assembly resolution 68/32 and its most recent version, resolution 80/49, 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.

12. The African 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 expresses grave concern over announcements to resume nuclear weapon testing and affirms that resumption of such testing undermines the NPT as well as Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty (CTBT) and further constitutes a threat to international peace and security.

13. The African Group reiterates its unwavering commitment to achieving the universality and early entry into force of the CTBT, which remains one of the most important instruments for halting the qualitative development and modernization of nuclear arsenals. The Group calls urgently and without qualification upon all States listed in Annex 2 of the Treaty that have not yet signed or ratified to do so while underling the special responsibilities of Nuclear Weapon States pursuant to Action 10 of the 2010 Action Plan. The Group further notes with grave concern any activities — wherever undertaken — that may

be inconsistent with the Treaty's objective and purpose, including activities at former or active nuclear test sites, and calls for full transparency and the application of the most rigorous verification standards by the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty Organization (CTBTO). The African continent, as a nuclear-weapon-test-free zone under the Treaty of Pelindaba, has a particular moral and legal authority to speak on this matter.

14. 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 the use or threat of use of nuclear weapons, and 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.

15. The African Group reaffirms its full and unreserved support for the TPNW as a landmark instrument of international humanitarian and disarmament law, and as an expression of the legitimate security interests and deeply held moral convictions of the non-nuclear-weapon majority of States. The Group looks forward with anticipation to the First Review Conference of the Treaty, to be held in the latter part of 2026 under the Presidency of South Africa. The Group warmly invites all States that have not yet signed or ratified the TPNW to do so

and encourages all observer States — including those allied to nuclear-armed States — to continue their constructive engagement with the Treaty process, in recognition that the humanitarian imperatives enshrined in the TPNW are universal and admit of no exception.

16. 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 socioeconomic development, including the 2030 sustainable development agenda.

17. Similarly, the Group stresses that proliferation concerns are best addressed through dialogue and diplomatic solutions on the basis of multilaterally negotiated, universal, comprehensive and non-discriminatory agreements. Nonproliferation 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 10<sup>th</sup> 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. The African Group calls upon all NPT States Parties, particularly nuclear weapon states, in the spirit of the Treaty's founding purposes and the shared commitment to the security of all humanity, to approach the 2026 NPT Review Conference with the requisite seriousness, flexibility and political will to achieve substantive, balanced and durable outcomes. As a minimum threshold for a credible Review Conference, the Group promotes : (i) a forward-looking Action Plan with concrete, time-bound and verifiable benchmarks for the fulfilment of Article VI obligations by Nuclear-Weapon States; (ii) a reaffirmation of the full 1995 package, including the Resolution on the Middle East and its implementation; and (iii) strengthened, institutionalized review mechanisms for all three pillars of the Treaty, including a permanent subsidiary body to monitor implementation between Review Conferences. The African Group warmly commends Ghana for its exemplary stewardship of the Third

PrepCom process in 2025 and urge all States Parties to carry forward the spirit of constructive engagement that has characterized that process into the Review Conference itself under the able leadership of Vietnam.

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 strengthening nuclear disarmament and nonproliferation 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. The Group welcomes the appointment of the Qualified Group of Experts to prepare a new comprehensive study on the question of nuclear weapon-free zones, and the establishment of new zones, including in the Middle East. The Group looks forward to the report of the Qualified Group of Experts during the 81<sup>st</sup> Session.

21. The African Group reiterates its profound and enduring concern over the persistent non-implementation of the 1995 NPT Review Conference Resolution on the Middle East — a solemn commitment that formed an integral and indivisible part of the package upon which the Treaty's indefinite extension rested, and whose non-fulfilment places the credibility of the Treaty itself in jeopardy. In the context of the gravely deteriorating security situation across the Middle East, the Group wishes to emphasize that the establishment of a zone free of nuclear weapons and all other weapons of mass

destruction has become not merely a long-term aspiration but an immediate and existential security priority for the peoples of the entire region and beyond. The Group calls upon all States in the region to engage constructively and in good faith with the United Nations Conference process established pursuant to UNGA Decision 73/546, and commends the important work accomplished at the six sessions held to date, including most recently under the Kingdom of Morocco Presidency in November 2025.

Chair,

23. The Group reiterates its call on the Conference on Disarmament (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 longstanding 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. Turning to the deliberations of Working Group II, the African Group underscores that the increasing militarization of artificial intelligence, the development of lethal autonomous weapons

systems capable of selecting and engaging targets without meaningful human control, and the weaponization of cyberspace represent systemic and potentially destabilizing threats to international peace and security that the international community has a collective obligation to address with commensurate urgency and ambition. The Group calls for the earliest possible commencement of negotiations, under the auspices of the United Nations, toward a legally binding instrument that prohibits lethal autonomous weapons systems, in conformity with international humanitarian law and the principles of humanity, distinction, proportionality and precaution.

26. The Group further calls for the development under the UN auspices of an internationally agreed normative framework governing the military applications of artificial intelligence, grounded in transparency, accountability and respect for human dignity. Critically, the African Group emphasizes that any such framework must incorporate robust provisions for technology transfer, capacity building and technical cooperation to ensure that developing nations — including African Member States — are not left behind in the governance of technologies that will shape the security landscape of the twenty-first century. These discussions must remain firmly anchored in the purposes and principles of the Charter of the United Nations.

27. Accordingly, it is imperative for the 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, harness their 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 and assistance efforts including on capacity building, technology transfer, with the aim of bridging the digital divide.

26. In conclusion, Chair, the Group wishes to reiterate its full support for the work of the UNDC UNDC, 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.

27. Thank you, Chair.