



PERMANENT MISSION OF NIGERIA TO THE UNITED NATIONS

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STATEMENT OF NIGERIA

DELIVERED BY

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ON THE OCCASION OF THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY INFORMAL INTERACTIVE
DIALOGUE ON THE 2017 REPORT OF THE SECRETARY-GENERAL ON THE
RESPONSIBILITY TO PROTECT TITLED

**"THE RESPONSIBILITY TO PROTECT AND
ACCOUNTABILITY FOR PREVENTION"**

NEW YORK
6TH SEPTEMBER 2017

Check against Delivery



Mr. President,

Let me from the outset thank the President of the General Assembly for organizing this interactive dialogue on the 2017 Report of the Secretary-General on the responsibility to protect entitled "The responsibility to protect and accountability for prevention". I also commend the Secretary-General for the painstaking efforts to prepare this comprehensive report.

Mr. President,

2. There is no gain-saying the fact that there is a disturbing trend in mass atrocity crimes in different parts of the world which requires collective efforts at national, regional and global levels to address. The efforts to protect civilians from genocide, war crimes, ethnic cleansing and crimes against humanity require that the conditions that allow for these crimes to thrive be brought to an end. In other words, beyond the law enforcement approach, dealing with the political economy of conflicts in a more holistic manner is crucial to finding potential remedies to the situation of conflicts and its attendant crimes around the world. It is in this

light that Nigeria endorses the emphasis of the Secretary-General on preventive measures to stop and mitigate mass atrocity crimes.

3. Though it is also important for perpetrators of these crimes to be held accountable, the capacity of States to do so with the prevalence of weak structures and institutions needs to be addressed. In this regard, multilateral cooperation should be enhanced to strengthen States' capabilities in order to deal with the threats posed by violent conflicts and crimes against humanity.

Mr. President,

4. We wish to stress that the thriving market in small arms and light weapons and weapons of mass destruction has continued to fuel these conflicts leading to mass atrocity crimes and humanitarian crisis in conflict areas, especially in Africa. Terrorist, militant and rebel groups continue to have access to weapons that are used to wreck havoc on communities in attempts to gain political power or push forward their selfish and unpatriotic agenda.

5. Nigeria has, in recent times, had her fair share of extreme terrorist activities of Boko Haram in the North East region of the country, which have led to huge displacement of about two million people and conflict related violence against civilians, including women and children that have been widely condemned. Nigeria has equally made great strides in degrading and decimating Boko Haram terrorists and collaborating with

the UN and other international partners to improve service delivery and enhance protection measures both in communities and areas where civilians seek refuge.

Mr. President,

6. Nigeria welcomes the Secretary-General's recommendations on practical steps to strengthen accountability. In line with the Secretary-General's recommendations, Nigeria has appointed a national focal point on the responsibility to protect, set up the Presidential Committee on Small Arms and Light Weapons to tackle the issue of proliferation of small arms and light weapons. A Human Rights Desk has also been established by the Nigerian military to ensure that the military operates in accordance with their rules of engagement. The Government has taken measures to enhance the security of civilians, including women and children in the camps for the Internally Displaced Persons (IDPs), to reduce their vulnerability and promote their safe return to their homes and reintegration into the society.

6. Nigeria is a signatory to the Rome Statute of the International Criminal Court. It has put in motion legal remedies for victims of Boko Haram terrorism which have resulted in diligent prosecution of 203 detained Boko Haram terrorists in competent courts of law as well as the reintegration, reorientation and rehabilitation programmes designed to meet the peculiarities of each victim of violence.

7. It has also intensified efforts at de-mining and removal of Improvised Explosive Devices (IEDs), facilitating military escort of humanitarian workers/aid, granting access to detention facilities, release of detainees after screening and

profiling and medical outreach to remote communities. Furthermore, the Code of Conduct and Rules of Engagement of the military were revised in December 2015 to address the new trend of violent extremism and the protection of human rights.

8. The Federal Government, on Friday 4th August, 2017, set up an independent judicial Commission to look into human rights abuses by military personnel in the country. Its mandate is to, among others,

- Scrutinize compliance of the Armed Forces with human rights obligations and rules of engagement, especially in local conflict and insurgency situations
- Investigate alleged acts of violation of international humanitarian and human rights law under the constitution of the Federal Republic of Nigeria, 1999 (as amended), Geneva Convention Act, African Charter on Human and Peoples' Rights and other relevant laws by the Nigerian security agencies
- Look at factors that might be hindering the quick resolution of local conflict and proffer solutions on how to prevent human rights violation in times of conflict in the future.

9. Nigeria has set up programmes to forestall situations that will create conditions for mass atrocity crime, such as the Presidential Initiative on the North East (PINE) - a comprehensive recovery blueprint which integrates all actors and actions into a coordinated set of activities expected to create traction for the rapid recovery of the North East from the wreckage caused by Boko Haram insurgents.

10. Nigerian Government launched the Safe School Initiative, aimed at providing education and piloting safe education facilities in the conflict affected areas of the north-east. Nigeria also endorsed the Safe Schools Declaration by which it committed to implementing the Guidelines for Protecting Schools and Universities from Military Use during Armed Conflict.

11. As part of efforts to counter violent extremism, Nigeria is taking steps to de-radicalize convicted terrorists through the deployment of emergency teams of psycho-social counselors and health professionals have been dispatched to the north east to assist with the profiling of victims for appropriate therapies. We are also utilizing Islamic scholars to counter extremist narratives by training them on various aspects of dialogues and religious counselling. We are also working assiduously with the affected communities to design economic revitalization programmes targeted at people most affected by terrorism and violent extremism.

Mr. President,

12. Nigeria commends the work of all the UN agencies, including the United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs in Nigeria (OCHA), UNDP, UN Women, UNICEF, Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees and International Donors actively working with Nigeria to ensure the restoration of peace, security and development in the North East. Nonetheless, Nigeria wishes to reiterate the need for better coordination and coherence of the work of these UN agencies in the region to enhance efficiency in order to deliver on their mandates.

13. Nigeria reiterates its commitment to sub regional, regional and global initiatives on the responsibility to protect and calls on the United Nations Security

Council and the General Assembly to intensify efforts to bridge the gap between their resolutions and practical implementation of resolutions aimed at stopping mass atrocity crimes.

Thank you.