Statement by Nigeria on behalf of the African Group on agenda item 4.1: Concrete Proposals on the Universal Periodic Review (UPR) during the

IGWG on Review of the HRC

Geneva, 26 October 2010

Mr. President,

I have the honour to make this statement on behalf of the African Group.

By way of recollection, the idea behind the establishment of the Universal Periodic Review (UPR), as encapsulated in resolution 60/251, was to create a unified and regular mechanism through which the Council will have the opportunity to periodically assess the "*fulfillment by each state of its human rights obligations and commitments*".

Four years on, and with over 120 States already examined, the UPR, undoubtedly, has lived up to its expectations as a State driven process. This is noticeable from the frequent statements by participating government delegations, underlying the spirit of openness, tolerance, cooperation and a consensual approach among the state actors. One could also notice the affirmation by governments that UPR, at best, is all about sharing of best practices.

Mr. President,

Right from the preparation of the national reports, to the adoption of the outcome documents during its first cycle, the UPR process has proven that it is of great significance and of enormous value to the work of the Human Rights Council. This process is, indeed, a testimony to the willingness of all countries, National Human Rights Institutions and NGOs to cooperate both at the national and international levels for the promotion and protection of human rights and fundamental freedoms.

The African Group has always believed in the usefulness of the UPR since its conception and has remained faithful to the relevance of this unique

mechanism, which some have described as the crown jewel of the Human Rights Council. Since 2008, eight sessions of the UPR have been successfully held thus strengthening our optimism of its significance.

In view of the foregoing, the African Group would like to propose the following:

i. Preservation of the intergovernmental character of the UPR, and its interactive feature/nature

ii. Safeguarding the basis, principles and objectives of the UPR as contained in the IB Package, allowing for the preservation of the UPR mechanism and avoiding its politicization and misuse to accomplish narrow political interest.

iii. Extension of the next and subsequent cycles of the UPR to five years to allow for proper stock-taking,

iv. Maintenance of an established order of review for the next and subsequent cycles to allow for predictability,

v. Observing a break between the first and second cycles – a period within which procedural issues will be concluded, and to allow for the first countries to be reviewed to prepare accordingly

vi. Dedicating subsequent cycles of the UPR to primarily centre on reviewing current developments and following-up to those recommendations made in the preceding cycles which enjoyed the support of the State under Review as well as on the voluntary pledges and commitments already made,

vii. Strengthening of UPR voluntary funds for both participation and implementation of UPR accepted recommendations, upon the request of the country under review

viii. Adoption of modalities for the functioning of the Voluntary Fund for Financial and Technical assistance and the appointment of its trustees.

Finally, Mr. President, the African Group believes that the full potentials of the UPR have not yet been utilised.

That explains our preference for the preservation of the mechanism as noticeable from our proposals above.

I thank you.