



## African Commission on Nuclear Energy

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### *Opening Address*

#### *Wilton Park Conference*

***“In Support of Africa’s Agenda 2063: pathways forward for expanding peaceful uses of nuclear energy and nuclear technology in Africa”***

*Delivered by*

*Messaoud BAALIOUAMER,  
Executive Secretary of the African Commission on Nuclear Energy  
Valley Lodge & Psa. Magaliesburg. South Africa  
25 February 2020*

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**Mr Director of Ceremony, Director Mark Smith**  
**Excellencies,**  
**Dear Guests,**  
**Ladies and Gentlemen,**

First, I would like, to Welcome all of you to this Conference and Thank You for Having Accepted, despite your Busy Schedule, to Participate!

On behalf of the African Commission on Nuclear Energy (AFCONE), I also Sincerely Thank and Congratulate Wilton Park and Global Affairs Canada, our Partners in the Organisation of this Important Event for the Smooth and Excellent Job Done So Far.

Our Meeting today will be, I hope, of Great Contribution to the International Community Efforts to Develop Safe and Secure Peaceful Uses of Nuclear Energy.

It is also a Consolidation of the 2019 Agenda implemented in Africa in Preparation to the 2020 NPT Review Conference starting next April. In this context, I would like to Thank His Excellency Ambassador Grossi, for the Events he Organised in Addis Ababa last August and in Abuja last December, in his Previous International Responsibility.

As you know the expectations are very high this year: This NPT Review Conference will consider a number of issues: universality of the Treaty; nuclear disarmament, including specific practical measures; nuclear non-proliferation, including the promoting and strengthening of safeguards; **measures to advance the peaceful use of nuclear energy, safety and security**; regional disarmament and non-proliferation; implementation of the 1995 resolution on the Middle East; measures to address withdrawal from the Treaty; measures to further strengthen the review process; **ways to promote engagement with civil society in strengthening NPT norms and in promoting disarmament education; and gender and representation.**

Our discussions will focus mainly on:

- Establishing the Current Status of the Peaceful Uses of Nuclear Energy in Africa, developed in particular with the IAEA since the Sixties,
- How to Implement More Efficiently these Peaceful Applications by addressing the Challenges met, including through Greater Synergy and Coordination of Efforts at the National and Regional Levels,
- The ways and means to Amplify and Strengthen the Cooperation with the African Union Development Partners.

**Excellencies,**  
**Ladies and Gentlemen,**

The African Union Agenda 2063 represent the master plan for transforming Africa into the global powerhouse of the future. It is the continent's strategic framework that aims to deliver on its goal for inclusive and sustainable development and is a concrete manifestation of the pan-African drive for unity, self-determination, freedom, progress and collective prosperity.



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The Agenda 2063 is the concrete manifestation of how the continent intends to achieve the vision: *An integrated, prosperous and peaceful Africa, driven by its own citizens, representing a dynamic force in the international arena*

“The need to envision a long-term 50 year development trajectory for Africa is important as Africa needs to revise and adapt its development agenda due to ongoing structural transformations; increased peace and reduction in the number of conflicts; renewed economic growth and social progress; the need for people centered development, gender equality and youth empowerment; changing global contexts such as increased globalization and the ICT revolution; the increased unity of Africa which makes it a global power to be reckoned with and capable of rallying support around its own common agenda; and **emerging development and investment opportunities in areas such as agri-business, infrastructure development, health and education as well as the value addition in African commodities**

**Agenda 2063 encapsulates not only Africa’s Aspirations for the Future but also identifies key Flagship Programmes which can boost Africa’s economic growth and development and lead to the rapid transformation of the continent”** (<https://au.int/en/agenda2063>)

**Excellencies,  
Ladies and Gentlemen,**

The Pelindaba Treaty, for which the African Union Commission is the depositary, prohibits the development, manufacture, stockpiling, acquisition, testing, possession, control or stationing of nuclear explosive devices in the Zone territory of States parties and the dumping of radioactive waste in the African Zone. It also prohibits any attack against nuclear installations in the Zone by the Parties and requires them to maintain the highest standards of physical protection of nuclear material, facilities and equipment, which are to be used exclusively for peaceful purposes.

The Treaty of Pelindaba (41 State Parties/ 52 Signatories) establishes the **African Commission on Nuclear Energy** as the body responsible for, inter alia, ensuring States parties’ compliance with their obligations under the Treaty and the Protocols thereto and promoting cooperation in the peaceful, safe and secure uses of nuclear science and technology in the continent, as well as advancing global disarmament and non-proliferation efforts.

The African Commission on Nuclear Energy, being the Unique Treaty Body mandated to deal with Nuclear Matters in Africa, AFCONe is aligning its strategic goals and enablers with those adopted by the African Union Commission.

**The adoption by the AUC of the agenda 2063, coupled with the commitment made by all African countries to the universal development agenda 2030 and associated Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), brings along serious regional challenges of critical importance in the context of a growing Africa.**

Another source of challenges but also of profitable opportunities for Nuclear Science & Technology is the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change, particularly since the adoption in 2015 of the Paris Agreement. Moreover, global food production is expected to increase by 70% by

2050 in order to meet the forecasted demand, mostly coming from developing countries. Non-communicable diseases such as cancer and cardio-vascular diseases are rising at an alarming rate, with the greatest increases in low- and middle-income countries. There are also acute water shortages in many parts of Africa and estimates show that, if current practices continue, several African countries will face severe shortfall between demand and supply of water by 2030.

Energy demand is expected to continue to rise, in particular in Africa, where a growing number of countries have expressed the need to have a secure and diverse energy supply, through reevaluation of existing and potential energy resources, including the nuclear power option which is expected to continue to play an important role in the energy mix of many countries,

In the other hand, both AUC 2063 Agenda and universal Agenda 2030 with its SDGs recognize the role of Science, Technology and Innovation (STI) as essential enablers for development and place the priority on partnerships as a critical means of implementation. In this context, the demand for nuclear techniques will continue growing at a fast pace to address many of these development challenges, including those pertaining to poverty and hunger, human health, energy, water and climate change.

Due to the growing number of African countries interested in peaceful applications of nuclear techniques to address specific development issues, it is expected that there will be increased needs at national and regional levels for building or further strengthening nuclear infrastructure and enhancing nuclear expertise and know-how to enable the African end-users to respond more effectively to their development priorities.

### **Regarding the Regional Organisations and Need for Better Coordination**

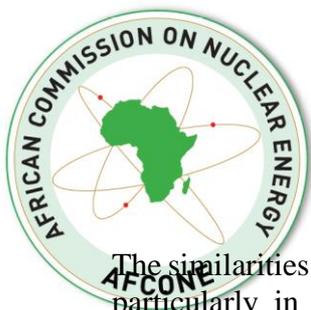
A) At the operational level, the African countries engaged, since 1990, in a regional agreement to enhance collectively their ability to upscale the contribution of NS&T to address their socio-economic development problems through the *African Regional Cooperative Agreement for Research, Development and Training Related to Nuclear Science and Technology (AFRA)*, which is an **inter-governmental Agreement** under the auspices of the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA).

B) Sustained utilization of the peaceful applications NS&T for socio-economic purpose requires strong national and regional safety and security frameworks to effectively protect the users, the general public and the environment from the harmful effects of ionizing radiation. Accordingly, the African countries have established, in collaboration with the IAEA, national regulatory authorities, and in 2009, the Forum of Nuclear Regulatory Bodies in Africa (**FNRBA**), to be the platform for exchanging experiences, sharing knowledge and advancing excellence in nuclear regulatory systems in the region.

The work of FNRBA is of high relevance to the AFCONE since it represents an integral part of its statutory mandate, particularly in relation to the pillars dealing with Safety, Security and Safeguards (3S).

C) At the international level, the work of the AFCONE will also be influenced by the technical cooperation programme of the **IAEA**, which is mandated by the United Nations to “...seek to accelerate and enlarge the contribution of atomic energy to peace, health and prosperity throughout the world” and “...ensure, so far as it is able, that assistance provided by it or at its request or under its supervision or control is not used in such a way as to further any military purpose.”

*Since its establishment in 1957, the IAEA has pursued and adapted its programme of work within the framework of its Statute to meet the evolving needs and developmental goals of its Member States.*



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The similarities between the statutory mandates of the AFCONE Secretariat and the IAEA are obvious, particularly in terms of control and monitoring functions (safeguards, safety, and security) and promotion of peaceful applications of NS&T for the purpose of socio-economic development.

The IAEA-supported programmes in Africa have significantly helped all Member States to establish national nuclear infrastructure and regulatory capabilities as well as regional mechanism for cooperation between and among the Member States.

The IAEA technical cooperation programmes in Africa have also been instrumental in building awareness about the key role of NS&T in support of the national development plans, particularly in priority areas such as human health, water and environment and food security, Human capacity building has been the cross-cutting priority that has received a particular attention over the 60 years of the IAEA existence.

In the face of the above-mentioned challenges, structural changes and unexploited opportunities, and based on the findings of the MDGs achievements and remaining gaps in the region, as described in the AU “Common African Position (CAP) on the post-2015 Development Agenda”, it is clear that the African State Parties need to work together through the AFCONE Secretariat as well as the AFRA and FNRBA, with clear support from the IAEA and other Development Partners, in order to address collectively the most pressing needs and to overcome the persistent challenges which are still hindering the impact of NS&T in the region.

**I am pleased to inform you about the Formal Process launched since last September with the Vital Support of the IAEA Secretariat to formalise as soon as possible this Year, the Quadripartite Cooperation framework: IAEA, AFCONE, AFRA and FNRBA.**

**Excellencies,  
Ladies and Gentlemen,**

AFCONE is targeting, for a Sustainable Ownership of the Continental Agenda, a more important and efficient contribution of the Regional Experts to a more concrete development and implementation in the Continent, of the more effective Safe and Secure Peaceful Nuclear Applications, including through Measurable Impact in the Field and Excellence in Education & Training and Research & Development.

This is one of the Priorities considered by the African Commission on Nuclear Energy (AFCONE).

Nuclear Science and Technology are issues of special interest to Africa:

Nuclear disarmament, non-proliferation and the peaceful uses of nuclear energy are therefore firmly entrenched in the Pelindaba Treaty.

In addition, the Pelindaba Treaty permits the IAEA to verify the non proliferation obligations. This provision calls for the conclusion of comprehensive safeguards agreements with the IAEA for purposes of verification of peaceful use activities.

Nuclear Technology is annually the subject of a comprehensive overview report submitted by the IAEA to its Member States during the General Conference. In addition, a resolution on strengthening the IAEA's activities related to nuclear science, technology and applications is annually discussed, updated and approved.

To Achieve the Paradigm Shift targeted by the Continent and to Reach a Sustained Dynamic Development Programme, AFCONE strongly believe on the Need, to Involve All the Concerned Capacities in Africa in particular the Experts in Nuclear Science and Technology, the Youth and Women in Nuclear and the Diaspora.

AFCONE strongly believe on the following parameters characterizing these Professionals: Energy Potential, Dynamic Role, Innovative Spirit, Power of the Ambition, Responsible Build of the Future...

**Excellencies,**

**Ladies and Gentlemen.**

AFCONE aims to support nuclear research and training activities with an emphasis on continually improving, in the field, the nuclear safety, security and safeguards, especially to contribute to the integration of the nuclear power within the regional energy mix system in a safe, efficient and secure manner.

- **In the Field of Nuclear Power:** more than 10 African Member States are implementing technical cooperation projects with the IAEA in this Field. INIR Missions have been organized The Last IAEA Conference on Nuclear Power and Climate Change (October 2019) Stated “Nuclear power has a major role to play in decarbonizing the energy sector to achieve global climate goals but will need enabling policies including a fair allocation of system costs to reach its full potential”,

In Africa, the Integration of the New NPP Technologies, including the Promising SMRs, will be discussed during this Meeting.

- **Most of the African Member States are implementing and/or considering national technical projects in the field of cancer therapy:** medical imaging, nuclear medicine, radiotherapy departments, dosimetry laboratories and training qualified medical physicists,

The IAEA addressed this important topic (nuclear technology in the fight against cancer) during the 2019 Scientific Forum organised in Conjunction with the 63<sup>rd</sup> General Conference. The situation in Africa is Alarming taking into account the high number of LDCs in Africa and the Improvement to Provide to the Existing National Cancer Plans.

- **The management of radioactive wastes** is considered as a priority, when developing peaceful nuclear applications, according to the IAEA recommendations and international standards.

According to the provisions of the Pelindaba Treaty (**Article 07**) and in close cooperation with the UN Environment Programme, and the support of international partners, AFCONE is considering a continuous implementation and follow up of regional programmes and projects related to the modern management of radioactive wastes in Africa.



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- **The implementation of independent national regulatory authorities**, through education and training of national regulatory authorities in the field of nuclear legislation and regulations.

For the sustainability of the programmes and in cooperation with International Partners, including the IAEA, AFCONE will develop Nuclear Law and Legislative Training Courses in Africa, through identified selected African National Regulatory Authorities and Qualified Universities.

- **Several Regional “Centres of Excellence” in Nuclear Security** are operational. They have been identified and supported by International Partners. These cooperation with, *in particular*, advanced European Centres and UNICRI, will be strengthened to fully implement the Pelindaba Treaty Provisions.

- **The implementation and operationalisation of National State Systems of Accounting for and Control of Nuclear Material (SSACs) for Nuclear Safeguards**, is one of the priorities of AFCONE, allowing the African States Parties to fulfil with their obligations according to the Comprehensive Safeguards Agreements (CSAs) signed with the IAEA:

According to the Pelindaba Treaty, AFCONE aims to make full use of the regional expertise and infrastructure in Africa: Some Advanced Laboratories are being identified and selected to play a regional role in this field: delivery of services (training, expert missions...), analysis, quality...

As we all know, the IAEA remains the only internationally recognized competent authority responsible for verifying and assuring compliance with NPT safeguards agreements, concluded in compliance with their obligations as stipulated in Article III of the Treaty. An effective safeguards system is an important building bloc in the nuclear non-proliferation regime and the international peace and security architecture.

- **The AFCONE programme puts a strong emphasis on developing nuclear skills and competence:** To achieve these objectives and complement the aforementioned programmes, AFCONE, in close cooperation with the IAEA and other Regional and International Partners, will support nuclear research and training activities.

- **I am pleased to:**

- Inform you that the Last African Union Specific Technical Committee Education Science and Technology Ministerial Meeting (13 Dec 2019) has adopted a Recommendation
  - Recalling the decision of the Executive Council (EX.CL/Dec.339 (X) (2007) on the contribution of nuclear energy to peace and sustainable development,
  - *Requesting the African Commission on Nuclear Energy (AFCONE), to undertake all the efforts, according to the provisions of the Pelindaba Treaty, in close cooperation with the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) and the African Union Strategic Partners to develop the nuclear science and technology R & D activities in Africa, including Education and Training in the Field, for the Safe and Secure Peaceful Use of Nuclear Energy,*

- Announce:
  - The Signature by AFCONE during the last 63<sup>rd</sup> IAEA General Conference of a Practical Arrangements (PAs) with the IAEA, strengthening the Cooperation in Safe and Secure Implementation in Africa of Peaceful Nuclear Applications.
  - Other Cooperative Agreements are in Discussion and Preparation with Several African Union Strategic Partners. The Main Objective is to Integrate to all the AU – Partners Summits and/or Strategic Meetings Agendas, the Development of Safe and Secure Peaceful Uses of Nuclear Energy in Africa.

**Excellencies,  
Ladies and Gentlemen,**

We are here today to Review the Challenges Faced and to Identify the Optimal Solutions: Every Regional Organisation has already, through its SWOT Analysis, a clear picture of the situation observed at some national levels which impact the regional programmes:

Among them, the following:

- Negative image associated with nuclear applications in some African Countries due to the absence of efficient public relations and communication strategies,
- Lack of integration into and alignment with the national development goals of Nuclear Science and Technology E&T and R&D activities and objectives,
- Lack of sound resource mobilization strategies resulted in high financial unpredictability,
- Lack of enforced legislative framework in some countries,
- Lack in some countries of good institutional governance,
- Difficulty to Transfer the Knowledge from the Laboratories to the Field and “Market”
- Etc ...

The above-mentioned challenges, which do not affect equally all African nuclear commissions and research institutions, have been taken into consideration when programming solutions under the IAEA technical cooperation programmes. Accordingly, several nuclear commissions and research institutions have overcome entirely or partially some of these challenges by developing and executing sound strategies and business plans for the nuclear facilities. These efforts are still on-going.

**The Current Conference Will Give the Opportunity to share the Positive Experiences Implemented, to Identify Innovative Pathways and to Adopt the Procedures of their Transfer.**

**In Conclusion, Excellencies,  
Ladies and Gentlemen,**

We assure you of the AFCONE and the African Union Commission full support and cooperation towards the successful implementation of the Conclusions and Recommendations of this Important Conference.

In Close Cooperation with the Other Nuclear Weapons Free Zones and the UN Office of Disarmament Affairs, cooperation reactivated in 2018 (VCDNP Task Force Meeting) and 2019 (Nur Sultan NWFZs Seminar), we will contribute to the Next International Agenda related to the NPT Pillar III.



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I would like to thank the Government of the Republic of South Africa, hosting the AFCONE Secretariat, for the Full Support Provided to the Commission. The Leadership of South Africa in the Nuclear Field recognized worldwide, including in Disarmament and Non Proliferation, Safe Nuclear Power Programme and Education & Training in Nuclear Science & Technology should be an example to follow for the Newcomers in Africa.

I express again my sincere thanks again to the Organisational Committee and I Wish Fruitful Deliberation and all the Success to the Conference.

**I Thank You for Your Kind Attention.**

