



African Commission on Nuclear Energy

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Statement to the

5th Conference of State Parties to the Pelindaba Treaty

*Midrand. Johannesburg. South Africa,
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Delivered by

HE Hadjaro Adam SENOUSI
Vice Chairperson

**AFRICAN COMMISSION ON NUCLEAR ENERGY
(AFCONe)**

**Excellencies, Distinguished Delegates,
Ladies and gentlemen,**

We wish to thank All of You for attending, despite the COVID-19 pandemic, this 5th Conference of State Parties organized this year, which coincide with the commemoration of the 25th Pelindaba Treaty Opening for Signature.

The very existence of such nuclear weapons programmes, as well as possession of the weapons themselves, is a threat to international peace and security. The possibility that these weapons could be used, or even tested, presents potential catastrophic humanitarian consequences.

The Organisation of African Unity (OAU) Council of Ministers met in 1964 and took note of the draft Convention for the Denuclearization of the Continent of Africa. Following this, the Assembly of Heads of State and Government of the OAU adopted a Declaration on the Denuclearization of Africa which called upon all States to respect the continent of Africa as a nuclear weapon free-zone and committed themselves to negotiate an international agreement under the United Nations (UN) not to manufacture or control atomic weapons.

The Declaration was endorsed by the UN General Assembly in 1965. The Treaty on the Establishment of an African Nuclear Weapon Free Zone (Pelindaba Treaty) was adopted in 1996 and entered into force in July 2009. The primary objective of the Treaty is to enhance regional peace and security through the prohibition of the possession and stationing of nuclear weapons throughout Africa and encouraging the peaceful uses of nuclear energy.

To ensure States Parties' compliance with the Treaty obligations, the African Commission on Nuclear Energy (AFCON) was created and South Africa was endorsed as its host country.

Excellencies, Ladies and Gentlemen,

The State Parties to the Pelindaba Treaty regard NWFZs as an important factor in preventing the proliferation – both vertical and horizontal – of nuclear weapons. In our view, the Pelindaba Treaty therefore constitutes a significant contribution to enhance global and regional peace and security.

The State Parties believe that the establishment of NWFZs on the basis of arrangements freely arrived at among all the States of the regions concerned constitutes an important disarmament and non-proliferation measure and promoting co-operation in the peaceful uses of nuclear energy.



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At a time of renewed interest in nuclear energy and a rapid expansion of both nuclear power (electricity generation) and non-power applications (in areas of human health, agriculture, etc) on the continent, AFCONe in terms of its mandate may encourage regional and sub-regional programmes for co-operation in the peaceful uses of nuclear science and technology. AFCONe could also play a key role in supporting sustainable development on the continent, notably in supporting key Agenda 2063 priority areas such as health, agriculture, industrialization and energy (amongst other priorities).

It could further play a positive role in advancing the global nuclear disarmament and non-proliferation efforts.

Excellencies, Ladies and Gentlemen,

The lack of progress on nuclear disarmament and the continued inertia in the multilateral disarmament fora, led the international community to conclude the Treaty Prohibiting Nuclear Weapons (TPNW) in 2017.

The Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT) has been continually undermined by the lack of implementation of the commitments related to nuclear disarmament in the Treaty, including those made at successive NPT Review Conferences, such as the 1995 and 2000 Review Conferences.

The Conference on Disarmament (CD) has not been able to fulfil its responsibility as the world's single multilateral disarmament negotiating forum for the past two decades.

The United Nations (UN) Disarmament Commission, which is the recognised deliberative body on disarmament, has not fared much better.

The Comprehensive Nuclear Test Ban Treaty (CTBT) which was concluded in 1996 and aimed at freeing the world of nuclear test explosions, thereby being an important step towards nuclear disarmament and nuclear non-proliferation, has not yet entered into force. However, considerable progress has been achieved in the promotion of the Treaty and the advancement of its verification regime.

The TPNW is the culmination of the humanitarian initiative on nuclear weapons launched in 2010 as a strategic intervention in response to the lack of progress on nuclear disarmament and the long-standing impasse in multilateral nuclear disarmament negotiations. We hope that African States will sign and ratify the TPNW to complement the work that we have already done under the Pelindaba Treaty.

The AFCONE reaffirms its full support to the United Nations Efforts for the establishment of a zone free of nuclear and all other weapons of mass destruction in the Middle East, as agreed at the 1995 NPT Review Conference.

The Signatories to the Pelindaba Treaty, recognize that the establishment of other NWFZs, especially in the Middle East, would enhance the security of States Parties to the African NWFZ.

I noted with great satisfaction the participation to this Conference of Representatives from all these Organisations & Treaties & Partners. They will certainly present in their Statements more detailed achievements and challenges.

Excellencies, Ladies and Gentlemen,

The African Commission on Nuclear Energy has considered the Strategic Note adopted by the 4th CSP as the main reference towards the implementation of the Treaty Provisions.

Allow me to recall the principal items targeted

- Priority given to meeting the needs of the States Parties, considered the most pressing in the different areas,
- Aiming for the progressive construction in Africa, of the specialized human capacity, able to take care, almost autonomously, within a period of 3 to 6 years, the concerns of the States Parties. The target will be to establish a critical mass of specialized teams and African experts, at the service of the States Parties and AFCONE, in each of the fields of activities related to the provisions of the Treaty of Pelindaba.
- Exploit the important infrastructure, already available in Africa (Research Centers, Institutes and Universities, Agencies, Institutions), recognized (at regional and/or international level) for their Excellence, in order to implement this program of activities (Courses, Workshops, Meetings, Conferences ...).
- Develop a communication and awareness-raising plan to promote the noble objectives of the Pelindaba Treaty within the States Parties as well as internationally, maintaining the status of the African continent as a Nuclear Free Zone (NWFZ);
- Inviting African States, not yet Parties to the Treaty, to join it with a view to more effective international action, in close co-operation with UNODA (United Nations Office of Disarmament Affairs), contributing to fight the proliferation of nuclear weapons and to effectively and efficiently undertake the disarmament process in the world, as well as the creation of a Nuclear Weapon Free Zone in the Middle East and the Indian Ocean;
- Research Optimal Synergy and Maximum Cooperation with all Regional and International Partners in charge of the implementation of these activities (IAEA, AFRA, CTBTO, FRNBA, Euratom, Agencies belonging to the Parties to the Protocols of the Pelindaba Treaty...)



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- considering the following parameters: convergence of objectives, complementarity of activities (avoiding duplication) and optimization of human and financial resources.

A Report on the Level of Implementation will be presented later today by the Secretariat.

In addition, a Scientific Seminar is organized by AFCONe tomorrow, in conjunction with this Conference, to Inform about the Status in Africa in All the Provisions of the Pelindaba Treaty and Discuss the Concrete Implementation of the AFCONe 2020-2021 Webinars.

Excellencies, Ladies and Gentlemen,

Significant operationalization of the Secretariat of AFCONe, which is critical for the Treaty of Pelindaba to achieve its objective, has not progressed with the required speed and efficiency for the reasons explained in the AFCONe Reports, in particular the critical budget issue.

Nonetheless, despite the encountered challenges and delays, key milestones have been realized paving the way for the Secretariat to function fully and effectively.

However, this cannot be achieved unless States Parties fulfil their financial obligations in a timely manner allowing the appropriate staffing of the Secretariat.

At this juncture, Considering the Budgeting Experience since the Entry into force of the Treaty:

AFCONe cannot sustain its operation if the two following issues are not yet addressed

- The Urgent Integration of the AFCONe to the AU Institutional Reform Process
- The Designation of a Permanent Executive Secretary and Facilitate the Appropriate Staffing of the Secretariat according to the long term organogram allowing its Stability.

The AFCONe has adopted a resolution in March 2021 aiming to address the challenging situation by requesting formally to the African Union Commission to include AFCONe in the AU Reform Process Launched, in conformity with the AU Executive Council February 2021 Decision on the “ Quota System Union Wide” {DIRECTS the Commission to finalize the draft structures of the Beijing office and all the other organs and institutions that are still outstanding in conformity with the stated Assembly Decision Assembly/AU/Dec.635 (XXVIII)}.

I Thank You for your kind attention and wish you successful deliberations

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