

**Remarks by Ms. Izumi Nakamitsu
United Nations High Representative for Disarmament Affairs**

**Fifth Session of the Conference of States Parties
to the African Nuclear-Weapon-Free Zone Treaty**

21 October 2021

[to be delivered by ODA representative at expert-level: Ms. Einas Mohammed]

Your Excellency, Ambassador Nozipho Mxakato-Diseko, representative of the Minister of International Relations and Cooperation of South Africa,

Your Excellency, Ambassador Mafa Sejanamane, Permanent Representative of the Kingdom of Lesotho to the African Union and Chairperson of the Fourth Conference of States Parties,

Your Excellency, Ambassador Bankole Adeoye, African Union Commissioner for Political Affairs, Peace and Security,

Your Excellency, Mr. Doctor Mashabane, Chairperson of the African Commission on Nuclear Energy,

The distinguished, Mr. Messaoud Baaliouamer, Executive Secretary of the African Commission on Nuclear Energy,

Esteemed delegates,
Ladies and gentlemen,

I would like to congratulate the States Parties to the Treaty of Pelindaba on convening the Fifth Session of the Conference of States Parties. I also commend the outstanding efforts by the African Commission on Nuclear Energy (AFCONE), and its Secretariat, for enabling this important event, especially during the challenging times of a global pandemic.

The Conference takes place during the symbolic year of the 25th anniversary of the opening for signature of the Treaty of Pelindaba. A key pillar of Africa's peace and security architecture, the African Nuclear-Weapon-Free Zone Treaty also plays an important role in underpinning the international nuclear disarmament and non-proliferation regime.

Globally, nuclear-weapon-free zones are success stories in our collective pursuit of nuclear disarmament. They are fundamental to global efforts to achieve a more peaceful and stable world. These hard-won institutions should not be taken for granted and every effort should be made to preserve and expand them. This is all the more important as we witness worrying signs of a new nuclear arms race, and when we continue to contend with the ever-present risk of non-State actors acquiring weapons of mass destruction.

In such an environment, it is, therefore, vital that States Parties and international partners spare no effort in supporting the mandate of the African Commission on Nuclear Energy – AFCONE. In the few years since its establishment, AFCONE has strengthened synergies with international and regional organizations and agencies, thereby positioning itself at the helm of pan-African cooperation to uphold nuclear disarmament and non-proliferation norms, strengthen nuclear security, and advance the peaceful uses of nuclear science and technology for sustainable growth and development on the continent. In this context, the presence of the relevant international

and regional organizations and agencies, provides additional political and practical value to the deliberations of the Conference.

AFCONE is also setting a commendable example by cooperating with other nuclear-weapon-free zones and ensuring that knowledge, experiences and expertise are shared for the common benefit of States Parties across the zones.

The Office for Disarmament Affairs is proud to contribute to this cause as duly reflected in Secretary-General António Guterres' Agenda for Disarmament, *Securing Our Common Future*, which refers to the zones as "landmark instruments" that represent an excellent example of the synergy between regional and global efforts towards a world free of nuclear weapons. In this connection, we are committed to further enhancing our cooperation with AFCONE. We foresee this cooperation spanning all areas of mutual interest, including on consolidating common action on nuclear disarmament and non-proliferation within the NPT framework, cooperation in the context of UNODA's role related to the TPNW, and strengthening joint assistance to African States in the implementation of Security Council resolution 1540 (2004).

Excellencies, ladies and gentlemen,

We are approaching key disarmament and non-proliferation milestones. These include the Tenth Review Conference of the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons, the First Meeting of States Parties to the Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons and the Comprehensive Review of the implementation of resolution 1540 (2004). As we do so, we count on the continued support from African States to achieve successful outcomes from these important processes.

On behalf of the Office for Disarmament affairs, I wish you productive discussions and a successful outcome that would further strengthen the African Nuclear-Weapon-Free Zone.

I, once again, extend my sincere congratulations and I thank you very much for your attention.