
African Nuclear Weapon Free Zone Treaty – Treaty of Pelindaba 5th Conference of States Parties

Remarks by Dr Robert Floyd

**Executive Secretary
Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty Organization**

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Chairperson,
Excellencies,
Distinguished Ladies and Gentlemen,

I convey my deep gratitude to Mr Messaoud Baaliouamer, Executive Secretary of the African Commission on Nuclear Energy (AFCONE), for the invitation to address the 5th Conference of States Parties to the African Nuclear-Weapon-Free Zone Treaty (Treaty of Pelindaba).

Visiting Africa in my new capacity as Executive Secretary was a top priority for me, and I am thankful for this opportunity. Although I have visited Africa many times from as far back as 1984, this occasion is particularly significant as my first official visit to the great continent of Africa.

The Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty Organization (CTBTO) and AFCONE have a strong record of cooperation, as evident by the agreement between the CTBTO and AFCONE on Practical Arrangements for and Consultation signed in July 2021.

I am particularly grateful to my predecessors, Dr Hofmann, Ambassador Tóth and Dr Zerbo, for their commitment to strengthening ties between the CTBTO and African States. Africa is playing a central role in global disarmament and non-proliferation efforts, and I look forward to building on the legacy of my predecessors as we labour together to achieve these noble aims.

This year we are celebrating the 25th anniversary of the opening for signature of both the Treaty of Pelindaba and the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty (CTBT). Both instruments are indispensable and mutually reinforcing elements of the global disarmament and non-proliferation regime and play an essential role in establishing the legal and technical framework for a world free of nuclear weapons.

The Treaty of Pelindaba finds its origins in the demand to consider and respect the continent of Africa as a denuclearized zone. Inherent in this desire for a denuclearized Africa was the recognition that economic and social development required the full attention of African States. Preventing nuclear proliferation in the region was essential for meeting these goals, and moreover, would contribute to the maintenance of regional and international peace and security.

The Treaty of Pelindaba stands strong as a monument to the collective commitment and determination of all African States for a continent free of nuclear weapons and continued resolute striving toward a world without nuclear weapons. My African brothers and sisters, I honour you.

In the twenty-fifth anniversary year of both these treaties, it is important to reflect upon the significance of such measures and appreciate the demonstrable successes that have been achieved in promoting peace and security through their adoption.

With the opening for signature of the Treaty of Pelindaba in April 1996, African States unequivocally renounced the possession of nuclear weapons. This conviction was founded on the belief that collective security and prosperity would be strengthened by promoting cooperation in the peaceful uses of nuclear energy, advancing general and complete disarmament, and enhancing regional and international peace and security.

Just five months later in September 1996, the CTBT was adopted. With this long-awaited victory, the international community declared that the era of unrestrained nuclear testing had come to an end. Thanks to the CTBT, the norm against nuclear testing is so powerful that less than one dozen tests have been conducted since its adoption; and only one country has violated it this millennium. To appreciate this contrast, consider that in the decades prior to the adoption of the CTBT, more than 2,000 nuclear tests were carried out throughout the world, including in Africa.

Let us be clear. The objectives of the CTBT and the Treaty of Pelindaba are being met. The success of both treaties has been possible because they include unequivocal commitments, foster cooperation and partnership, and provide for effective verification measures. While the IAEA provides for the verification of safeguards obligations in the Pelindaba Treaty, the CTBT establishes the verification and enforcement mechanism that gives teeth to the Article 5 prohibition in the Pelindaba Treaty on nuclear testing.

Beyond the Treaty of Pelindaba, the CTBT and its verification regime provides confidence that States Parties to other non-proliferation and disarmament instruments, such as other nuclear-weapon-free zones and the Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons, are in compliance with obligations not to carry out nuclear explosions of any kind. It also fulfils a core Article 6 disarmament commitment of the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons

Solidifying the linkages between the various treaties and mechanisms that comprise the international nuclear disarmament and non-proliferation regime is vital. It is only through the strengthened implementation of such commitments and obligations that we can move the world closer to the shared goal of universal, non-discriminatory, and verifiable nuclear disarmament.

As we celebrate the successes of the Treaty of Pelindaba and the CTBT in this 25th anniversary year, let us commit today to work together in our outreach efforts to all States yet to ratify the CTBT or the Treaty of Pelindaba. And let us commit to stand with and support the few African States that have yet to ratify these treaties. Coordinating the provision of legal and other assistance to these States will benefit regional and international peace and security by advancing the universal application of both of these crucial instruments. And in so doing, we will have brought the promise of a world free of nuclear weapons ever closer to fulfilment.

Thank you.