

**Statement by Minister Chen Xufeng in
The 5th Session of the Conference of States Parties to
The Treaty of Pelindaba**

Ladies and gentlemen, colleagues and friends,

Good afternoon. I am very pleased to be invited to the 5th Conference of State Parties to the Treaty of Pelindaba. Due to the pandemic situation, I have to attend this conference virtually, but let me express my gratitude to the AFCONE for its wonderful organization of this event.

The Chinese side believes that the establishment of nuclear-weapon-free zone is an important step towards the goal of building a nuclear-weapon-free world, and contributes to the promotion of international nuclear disarmament and non-proliferation process. China has always been supporting Africa's effort to create the African nuclear free zone. We signed the 1st and 2nd Protocol of the Treaty of Pelindaba once the Treaty was open for signing, which showed China's firm support for the Treaty. China will faithfully fulfill its obligations regulated in the 1st and 2nd Protocol of the Treaty as always. We are willing to work with African countries, and continue to make unremitting efforts to achieve Africa's peace and tranquility, as well as the goals of complete prohibition and thorough destruction of nuclear weapons, thus creating a nuclear-weapon-free world.

In addition to firmly supporting the Treaty of Pelindaba, the Chinese government has signed and ratified the Protocols to the Latin America Nuclear Weapons Free Zone Treaty, the South Pacific Nuclear Free Zone Treaty, and the Treaty on a Nuclear-Weapon-Free Zone in Central Asia. China respects Mongolia's nuclear-weapon-free status, and firmly supports the Southeast Asian Nuclear-Weapon-Free Zone Treaty. We wish to promote the P5 to restart consultations with the ASEAN countries on the remaining issues to strive for the signing of the protocol as soon as possible. China supports the Middle East countries to, on the basis of UNGA resolutions and relevant documents of NPT Review Conference, promote the creating of a Middle East nuclear-weapon-free zone free of nuclear weapons and other weapons of mass destruction, and constructively participated in the first UN conference in 2019. For many years, China actively calls upon all nuclear countries to commit to unconditional no use or threat of use nuclear weapons against non-nuclear-weapon states and nuclear-weapon-free zones, and forge international legal documents as soon as possible.

China always holds that international efforts of nuclear non-proliferation such as nuclear-weapon-free zone, should not damage the legitimate rights of all countries to peacefully use nuclear energy. We have been supporting Africa's peaceful use of nuclear energy all the time. China cooperated with relevant countries under the framework of IAEA, and successively helped Ghana and Nigeria to complete the conversion from highly enriched uranium to low enriched uranium. Furthermore, we actively provide technological assistance to other member states through IAEA. We worked with IAEA to establish International Construction Training Center on Nuclear Power Plant, which has successfully received nearly 300 students from over 50 African

and Asian countries, providing training on nuclear power plant construction and nuclear safety to developing countries. China also established “the Chinese Government Atomic Energy Scholarship”, annually recruits master and doctoral students in nuclear engineering and nuclear technology from other developing countries, contributing to talent development for peaceful use of nuclear energy, and welcoming our African brothers to apply for it. Moreover, China cooperates with IAEA to set up the program for pesticide research by use of nuclear techniques, and wishes to share knowledge and experiences with African countries on mosquito-borne diseases control.

Both China and Africa stand firmly for the international nuclear disarmament and nuclear non-proliferation system based on the NPT. The 10th NPT Review Conference will be held early next year. China is willing to work with African Countries to maintain the universality, authority and validity of the NPT, promote the 3 pillars of the Treaty in a balanced manner, maintain the existing international consensus on nuclear disarmament, promote the political and diplomatic solutions to the regional hot spot nuclear issues, facilitate international cooperation on peaceful use of nuclear energy, and create favorable conditions for the success of the Review Conference.

At the moment, the NPT is facing new challenges. The US, the UK and Australia decided to undertake nuclear submarine cooperation which involves weapons-grade highly enriched uranium. Their action is a flagrant violation of the spirit of NPT, which shocks the international non-proliferation system. It will intensify the regional arms race and damage global and regional peace and stability. Therefore, the international community have reason to question the sincerity of Australia, which is a non-nuclear-weapon state, to abide by the obligations of non-proliferation. Moreover, it reveals once again the double standard that has always been pursued by the US and the UK, which put narrow-minded geopolitical interests over the rule of international non-proliferation. The international community, including the African countries, should urge the 3 countries to stop this irresponsible action.

Since the first day that China possessed nuclear weapons, it has advocated the complete prohibition and thorough destruction of nuclear weapons, committed itself to the no-first-use of nuclear weapons at any time and under any circumstances, and pledged unconditional no use or threat of use of nuclear weapons against non-nuclear-weapon states and nuclear-weapon-free zones. China is the only nuclear power that makes and keeps such commitment. China never deploys nuclear weapons overseas, never and will not participate in the nuclear arms race in any form.

Last but not least, China wishes to work together with African countries to make unremitting efforts for the goal of complete prohibition and thorough destruction of nuclear weapons, and to create a nuclear-weapon-free world.

Thank you for your attention.