STATEMENT BY

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FIRST PREPARATORY COMMITTEE FOR THE
2020 REVIEW CONFERENCE OF THE PARTIES TO THE TREATY ON THE NON-
PROLIFERATION OF NUCLEAR WEAPONS

CLUSTER 2 ISSUES

08 MAY 2017
VIENNA

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Chairperson,

My delegation associates itself with the statement delivered on behalf of the Non-Aligned Movement and would like to share some additional views in its national capacity.

South Africa continues to hold the view that nuclear disarmament and nuclear non-proliferation are mutually reinforcing processes and both elements are essential for attaining and maintaining a world free of nuclear weapons. We are therefore supportive of efforts aimed at promoting nuclear non-proliferation. However, we stress that these efforts should not deny or impose conditionalities for access to technology to countries, especially developing countries, under the guise of non-proliferation measures.

My delegation supports the International Atomic Energy Agency's (IAEA) efforts to strengthen the safeguards system in all States with safeguards agreements in force and within its legal mandate as this will contribute to mutual confidence in the peaceful nature of a State's nuclear activities and the absence of undeclared nuclear activities or material. It is our view that strengthened safeguards greatly facilitate the transfer of nuclear technology and use of nuclear energy to the benefit of developing countries.

Chairperson,

South Africa reiterates its conviction that the IAEA is the only internationally recognized competent authority responsible for verifying and assuring compliance with safeguards agreements of States Parties, concluded in compliance with their obligations as stipulated in Article III of the Treaty. We join other States Parties in sharing our commitment to provide the Agency with the necessary support and assistance to fulfil its safeguards and verification mandate.

Whilst the Additional Protocol is a voluntary measure, my delegation recognizes its importance as a confidence building measure, especially with regard to those States with advanced nuclear programmes and facilities. It remains South Africa's view that
the Additional Protocol is an indispensable instrument which enables the IAEA to build confidence and provide credible assurances regarding the absence of undeclared nuclear material and activities.

Chairperson,

My delegation however expresses its disappointment that no progress has been made to implement the specific actions agreed to at the 2010 NPT RevCon in the development of appropriate legally-binding verification arrangements with the IAEA to ensure the irreversible removal of fissile material designated by each nuclear-weapon State as no longer required for military purposes. In addition, we further regret that no progress has been made for additional declarations of stockpiles of fissile material that could be used in nuclear weapons or other nuclear explosive devices. My delegation also remains concerned about possible withdrawals by the nuclear-weapon States of nuclear material from such selected facilities as provided for in their respective agreements. It is incumbent on the nuclear weapon States to refrain from such withdrawals, and to apply the principles of irreversibility, verifiability and transparency in relation to their NPT obligations.

Chairperson,

We continue to work closely with the IAEA with regard to safeguards implementation in my country. Having drawn the broader conclusions in South Africa for the first time in 2010, confirming that there was no indication of diversion of declared nuclear material from peaceful nuclear activities and no indication of undeclared nuclear material or activities, the IAEA started implementing Integrated Safeguards approach in July 2015. We are pleased that South Africa continues to maintain its broader conclusion.

Considering the significant costs of implementing safeguards globally, my delegation has always held the view that the implementation of integrated safeguards was intended to ensure savings through the reduction of inspections in the field and which would in turn decrease the burden on the Member State given the decrease in Agency staff inspections. We therefore look forward to receiving the Agency’s report
about lessons learned and experience gained in State-level approaches for States under integrated safeguards after State-Level approaches have been updated and are being implemented for all such States, including a cost benefit analysis as requested by Member States during the IAEA General Conference in 2016.

Chairperson,

South Africa has consistently articulated the view that nuclear security should be located within the broad framework of nuclear disarmament, nuclear non-proliferation objectives and the peaceful uses of nuclear energy.

We should all remain vigilant of the risks inherent in the continued existence of nuclear weapons and high-risk, unsafeguarded material that fall outside international oversight, as well as those posed by nuclear terrorism, the illicit nuclear network and criminal acts aimed at using nuclear or other radioactive material for malicious acts. South Africa therefore remains committed to maintaining effective nuclear security of all nuclear material consistent with international obligations, and to cooperating with other States to raise nuclear security levels internationally.

Chairperson,

South Africa supports the full implementation of the NPT, as well as its universal application, in pursuit of the ultimate goal of achieving a world entirely free from nuclear weapons. We therefore believe that the international community must redouble its efforts to achieve universal adherence to the NPT, strengthen the multilateral institutions responsible for disarmament and non-proliferation issues, and be vigilant against any steps that could undermine the determination of the international community as a whole, to prevent the proliferation of nuclear weapons.

I thank you, Chairperson.