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STATEMENT BY

THE REPUBLIC OF SOUTH AFRICA
ON THE IMPLEMENTATION OF THE PROVISIONS
OF THE TREATY RELATING TO THE
INALIENABLE RIGHT OF ALL PARTIES TO THE TREATY
TO DEVELOP RESEARCH, PRODUCTION AND USE OF
NUCLEAR ENERGY FOR PEACEFUL PURPOSES,
WITHOUT DISCRIMINATION AND IN CONFORMITY
WITH ARTICLES I AND II:
ARTICLE (3) AND IV, PREAMBULAR PARAGRAPHS 6 AND 7,
ESPECIALLY IN THEIR RELATIONSHIP TO
ARTICLE III (1), (2), (4) AND PREAMBULAR PARAGRAPHS 4 AND 5,
AND ARTICLE V

(NEW YORK, APRIL/MAY 2004)

(CHECK AGAINST DELIVERY)

Mr. Chairperson,

The benefits of the peaceful application of nuclear energy is of particular relevance and importance to Africa given the urgent need for sustainable and accelerated economic growth on the Continent.

In this context, South Africa continues to promote international co-operation in the field of peaceful nuclear activities, as envisaged in Article III (3) of the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT) and also encourages the exchange of scientific information, particularly in Africa, for the further development of the applications of atomic energy for peaceful purposes, in accordance with preambular paragraph 7.

My delegation therefore welcomes projects supported and initiated by the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) that aim at promoting socio-economic and developmental aspects in developing countries. In the absence of any significant nuclear material or facilities in most African countries, the IAEA's technical co-operation programme remains one of the most important reasons why many developing countries joined the Agency. Recent reports on the implementation of the Millennium Development Goals indicate that most of the important targets set by the Millennium Summit are in danger of not being reached. I should like to remind this Preparatory Committee of the solemn commitments made by the Heads of States and Government of 170 countries at the Millennium Summit aimed at the eradication of poverty and the creation of a better life for all. South Africa believes that the IAEA's technical co-operation activities have the potential to make a substantial contribution in this regard.

Mr. Chairperson,

Many IAEA projects are of strategic importance to developing countries, particularly for Africa, and can provide the necessary impetus for accelerated economic development, thereby playing a meaningful role in the achievement of the Millennium Development Goals and in enhancing the New Partnership for Africa's Development (NEPAD). My delegation would encourage the widest possible involvement of all States Parties, particularly developing countries, in the ongoing research and development activities of the IAEA and the application of relevant technology.

Some of the important work currently undertaken by the IAEA include the development of appropriate technology for anti-personnel landmines identification based on the pulsed electrostatic neutron generator (PELAN – Pulsed Elemental Analysis by Neutrons), which we hope would contribute to our efforts to eradicate this scourge that continues to hamper development activities in mine-affected post-conflict areas. The PATTEC (Pan African Tsetse and Trypanosomosis Eradication Campaign) is another important research project that could play a key role in Africa's development efforts. Research work is also being undertaken on the possible application of the sterile insect technique (SIT) for the eradication of malaria, a pandemic that continues to undermine global efforts aimed at creating a better life for all.

Mr. Chairperson,

In the context of the development of nuclear energy for peaceful purposes, my delegation has already stressed at other international fora that it is important that innovative ways be found to accommodate the interests of developing countries. We therefore reiterate that efforts should be concentrated on the application of nuclear techniques in combating the occurrence of infectious diseases such as TB, malaria, and HIV/AIDS, which continue to hamper economic prosperity and development in many parts of the world.

Mr. Chairperson,

South Africa continues to work within the context of the African Regional Co-operative Agreement for Research, Development and Training related to Nuclear Science and Technology (AFRA) in order to share expertise and experience to promote and develop the beneficial uses of radiation and nuclear technology for socio-economic development in Africa. AFRA's approach is that African problems relating to nuclear technology should, as far as possible, be solved by the utilisation of expertise residing on the African continent, covering its five major themes, namely radiation safety, human health, agricultural development, industrial applications, and self-reliance and sustainability. Technology and skills transfers mostly take place through expert missions and training events, such as workshops, seminars, etc.

Mr. Chairperson,

South African experts have also continued to participate in various expert missions to other countries, most of them in Africa, and our scientists regularly form part of IAEA teams that developed a set of indicators for sustainability of national nuclear institutions in Africa. Large numbers of individuals are annually visiting South Africa for fellowship training and scientific visits and South African experts will continue to visit other countries for training courses and demonstrations on the use of radioisotopes for industrial plant inspections.

Mr. Chairperson,

Regarding specific projects related to the peaceful uses of nuclear energy in my country, I am glad to inform you that South Africa has actively continued with its development work on the Pebble Bed Modular Reactor (PBMR) project as part of the international drive to establish novel concepts for nuclear power generation in the 21st century. The PBMR is intended to be an inherently safe nuclear reactor and is regarded as the leading exponent of the so-called Generation IV nuclear power technology.

Mr. Chairperson,

The above is meant to demonstrate South Africa's determination to continue making meaningful contributions to international co-operation on the peaceful uses of nuclear energy, particularly within an African context. The peaceful application of nuclear technology forms an integral part of the NPT and, as such, should serve as a reminder of the

benefits that nuclear energy can hold. South Africa will therefore continue to encourage the international community to maximise the benefits of nuclear technology applications for peaceful purposes, as envisaged by the Treaty.

At the same time, Mr. Chairperson, South Africa strongly supports the tightening of controls over the export of nuclear material, especially in view of the latest revelations regarding the existence of an international network for the illicit trade and smuggling of such technology, material and equipment. However, it is imperative that such a control system should be universal, transparent, equitable and ensure the preservation of the inalienable rights of all States to the peaceful uses of nuclear energy.

In this regard, my delegation would support the creation by the international community of a safe orderly system to supply fuel for civilian nuclear reactors without adding to the danger of nuclear weapons proliferation. The criteria for such supply should, however, be the acceptance of the IAEA's Additional Protocols rather than the renunciation of enrichment and reprocessing technologies. Several countries have such facilities, and the objective should not be to maintain the status quo. It should also be equitable, as any distinction made in this regard would only exacerbate existing inequalities.

Mr. Chairperson,

South Africa will continue to make every effort, in accordance with our international obligations and within our national legislative framework, to ensure that transfers of material, technology or equipment only takes place from South Africa for peaceful purposes.

I thank you.