



**STATEMENT
BY**

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**AT THE FIRST SESSION OF THE PREPARATORY COMMITTEE FOR THE
2010 REVIEW CONFERENCE OF THE PARTIES
TO THE TREATY ON THE NON-PROLIFERATION OF NUCLEAR
WEAPONS**

**AGENDA ITEM 4: GENERAL DEBATE ON ISSUES RELATED TO ALL
ASPECTS OF THE WORK OF THE PREPARATORY COMMITTEE**

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Chairperson,

Since this is the first time that I am taking the floor, allow me to congratulate you on your election as Chair of this First Preparatory Committee (PrepCom) meeting for the 2010 Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty (NPT) Review Conference (RevCon) and to assure you of my delegation's fullest support and co-operation during the course of deliberations.

In the context of the deliberations that will be taking place at this PrepCom, South Africa will be putting forward its own views both in the context of this statement, as well as in statements during our consideration of specific issues.

We are also associated with the statements and proposals that will be made by the Non-Aligned Movement and the New Agenda Coalition. This statement by our delegation will concentrate on general issues related to our work.

Chairperson,

For my delegation, this meeting is indeed an important occasion. It is the start of a new Review Cycle of an almost universal instrument that has become the foundation of the nuclear non-proliferation and disarmament regime. Whilst we agree that the events of the past few years have certainly tested the NPT, we remain convinced that this instrument has and can continue to make a significant contribution to international peace and security. As we enter the new Review Cycle, let it be our resolve to strengthen this instrument through the full implementation of all our obligations and commitments agreed to at previous Review Conferences, in full recognition of our rights under the Treaty.

Since the 2000 Review Conference, we have witnessed an increasing emphasis by some States on the non-proliferation aspect of the Treaty – sometimes even to the exclusion of the other equally important provisions of the Treaty. I need to repeat today that the complete elimination of nuclear weapons and the assurance that they will never be produced again remain the only assurance against their use. This should remain our highest priority.

Recent pronouncements by some nuclear-weapon States seem to suggest that the unspecific terms of Article VI of the NPT do not bind them to any specific timeframe to undertake their obligations under the Treaty. Let me remind you of what my country has been saying since we became a State Party to the Treaty: Any presumption of the indefinite possession of nuclear weapons by the nuclear-weapon States remains incompatible with the provisions of the NPT, as well as with the broader goal of the maintenance of international peace and security. By casting doubt about the true meaning of Article VI and by completely ignoring the various agreements reached at previous Review Conferences, including the unequivocal undertaking to nuclear disarmament made by all States Parties during the 2000 NPT Review Conference, such statements only serve to inspire others to also renege on their obligations and undertakings and unravel what can only be described as a carefully balanced pact between the haves and have-nots.

Upon South Africa's accession to the NPT we accepted the inherently discriminatory nature of the NPT, whereby some States are recognised as nuclear-weapon States and all other States are recognised as non-nuclear-weapon States. However, all non-nuclear-weapon States, including South Africa, believe that maintaining this indefinite discriminatory approach is incompatible with our common objective of a world free of nuclear weapons, and indeed also with the obligations contained in the NPT.

Chairperson,

For South Africa, the NPT remains as relevant as ever and we will continue to promote universal adherence to it. To quote from the words of South Africa's late Foreign Minister, Mr Alfred Nzo, at the 1995 NPT Review and Extension Conference "South Africa took the decision to destroy its nuclear weapons and to become a State Party to the NPT because we saw our security being guaranteed by its provisions".

While the primary responsibility for undertaking the necessary steps for the elimination of nuclear weapons lies with the nuclear-weapon States, it should be emphasized that the obligation to work towards this goal also lies with all States and humanity as a whole. Nuclear Weapons are not only a threat to their possessors, they are a threat to all of humankind.

In this context, South Africa recognises and highly appreciates the valuable contribution made by civil society in highlighting this threat and mobilising communities against nuclear weapons. We believe that all States should strengthen their partnership with civil society in order to realise our common goal of the elimination of nuclear weapons.

Chairperson,

I would like to highlight some of the important steps on the road to nuclear disarmament thereby leading to the elimination of all nuclear weapons:

The 3 States that have not yet done so should adhere unconditionally and without delay to the NPT as non-nuclear-weapon States.

We need to work towards the early return of the Democratic People's Republic of Korea to the NPT and the International Atomic Energy Agency.

The States that have not yet done so should conclude full-scope safeguards agreements with the International Atomic Energy Agency, to be followed by additional protocols on the basis of the Model Protocol approved by the Board of Governors of the Agency on 15 May 1997

Those States that have not yet done so should sign and ratify unconditionally and without delay, the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty and, pending the entry into force of the Treaty to observe a moratorium on nuclear tests. The CTBT is a major instrument in the field of nuclear disarmament and non-proliferation and was an integral part of the 1995 agreement that allowed the indefinite extension of the Treaty. We recall that the 2000 Review Conference recognized the early entry into force of the CTBT as a practical step to achieving nuclear disarmament and non-proliferation objectives.

There is a need to conclude negotiations on a fissile material treaty that would ban the future production of fissile material for weapons purposes. We are encouraged by developments in the Conference on Disarmament that could lead to the commencement of negotiations on a fissile material treaty, if States can show the necessary political will to make it happen.

South Africa supports all efforts to establish a Nuclear-Weapon-Free Zone in the Middle East, as such a zone will extend the Nuclear-Weapon-Free Zone in Africa, thereby establishing a contiguous zone free of nuclear weapons.

South Africa continues to support the Trilateral Initiative between the United States, the Russian Federation and the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA), which seeks to reduce the level of weapons-grade material in the two countries and place the resulting material under IAEA control. We reiterate our call for the completion and implementation of the Trilateral Initiative

South Africa continues to support the placing by all the nuclear-weapon States of fissile material no longer required for military purposes under international verification by the IAEA.

South Africa strongly supports the principle of regular reporting, within the framework of the strengthened review process for the NPT, by all States Parties on the implementation of Article VI and paragraph 4 (c) of the 1995 Decision on "Principles and Objectives for Nuclear Non-Proliferation and Disarmament".

South Africa will continue to support activities aimed at strengthening and developing verification capabilities to provide assurance of compliance with nuclear disarmament agreements for the achievement and maintenance of a nuclear-weapon-free world

At the same time, we remain concerned at the lack of the expected progress following the unequivocal undertaking by nuclear-weapon States to accomplish the total elimination of their nuclear arsenals leading to nuclear disarmament agreed to at the 2000 NPT RevCon

Notwithstanding this concern, South Africa is particularly encouraged by the recent statement of a nuclear-weapon State reaffirming its unequivocal undertaking to the disarmament measures contained in the 1995 and 2000 Review Conference decisions and final document. We call upon the other nuclear-weapon States to also reaffirm the same commitment. Whilst South Africa also welcomes the reduction of this nuclear-weapon State's operationally available warheads and the assurances that they will be fully dismantled, we believe that such reductions should be irreversible.

Chairperson,

Care should be taken not to expand the current "have/have-not" regime with regard to nuclear weapons also to the capacity to produce nuclear fuel and to approach the issues surrounding nuclear fuel exclusively as a problem in non-proliferation, without any recognition of the importance of such controls in shaping the future of disarmament.

As we celebrate the 50th Anniversary of the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA), my delegation wishes to reiterate that there should be no unwarranted restrictions on the inalienable right of States to the peaceful application of nuclear energy. The Agency has since its inception achieved significant progress in fostering the peaceful use of nuclear energy in its Member States, and this process needs to be strengthened and enlarged in the next 50 years.

States Parties should therefore guard against actions, which would merely serve to exacerbate existing inequalities. With regard to current discussions on the fuel cycle, it is imperative that we do not create another kind of cartel that would exclude full participation, particularly by States in full compliance with their safeguards obligations. We wish to recall that nothing in the NPT shall be interpreted as affecting the inalienable right of all Parties to develop research, production and use of nuclear energy for peaceful purposes without discrimination and in conformity with Articles I, II and III.

The NPT provides a framework of confidence and co-operation within which the development of the peaceful uses of the atom can take place. The establishment of credible mechanisms to assure the reliable supply of nuclear fuel should involve the Agency, which has a legitimate role in accordance with its Statute to encourage and assist the practical application of nuclear energy for peaceful purposes. Furthermore, the Agency also has a special responsibility to take into consideration the needs of the under-developed areas of the world. These discussions focussing on the need for and the possible framework of a mechanism to ensure access to nuclear fuel should not involve any preconditions that would even hint at the possibility that non-nuclear-weapon States, in conformity with their legal obligations under the NPT, should forgo their inalienable right.

Chairperson,

With regard to the peaceful uses of nuclear energy and the role of the International Atomic Energy Agency, South Africa wishes to reiterate the importance of ensuring that resources to the Technical Cooperation Programme are sufficient, assured and predictable. Such resources would enable the Agency "to accelerate and enlarge the contribution of atomic energy to peace, health and prosperity throughout the world", as provided for under its Statute.

We commend the Agency for its continuing effort to identify elements within the TC Programme that can be harmonised with the development goals of NEPAD that can lead to the achievement of the Millennium Development Goals by 2015. This is particularly important in the development of strong operational partnerships between the IAEA and other international agencies and financial institutions.

With the anticipated growth and expansion of atomic power globally there is a need to strengthen the regulatory approaches in respect of nuclear, radiation, radioactive waste and transport safety and to ensure the safe utilisation of this energy source. South Africa therefore strongly supports the IAEA Safety Fundamentals, which can facilitate the establishment of an effective legal and governmental framework for safety in all nuclear activities, and also serve as reference in international efforts to harmonize legislation and regulations in individual countries.

In this context, it is also important to continue discussions between coastal and shipping states that will contribute to an improved mutual understanding and the building of confidence, thereby facilitating communication in respect of the safe maritime transport of radioactive material.

Chairperson,

South Africa supports new measures to strengthen the safeguards system, as this system needs to be adapted to changing circumstances. We strongly believe that those States in possession of advanced technologies that can be used for both peaceful and non-peaceful purposes bear a special responsibility to build confidence and to provide assurances about the peaceful nature of their nuclear programmes. For my delegation, the Additional Protocol remains an important instrument to build confidence and to provide assurances regarding the continued peaceful application of nuclear energy. We therefore call on these countries to conclude an Additional Protocol with the IAEA as soon as possible.

At the same time, South Africa remains concerned that some non-nuclear-weapon States still do not have Comprehensive Safeguards Agreements (CSAs) in force, as is required by Article III of the NPT and thus no safeguards conclusion is possible.

Chairperson,

My delegation remains concerned about the illicit clandestine nuclear networks which poses a serious threat to the NPT. It is imperative that all countries that have been affected by the network closely co-operate to eliminate this threat. Our own experiences with the illicit network for the transfer of and trade in nuclear material, equipment and technology have clearly shown that States need to provide their pro-active and full support to the Agency in its verification obligation.

In conclusion, Chairperson,

South Africa looks forward with optimism to the 2010 Review Conference. The review cycle and the Review Conference itself provide us with a unique opportunity to deal with all issues that impact upon the NPT. We should guard against adopting decisions on such issues in other fora, as this will surely undermine the NPT.

We therefore recommit ourselves to work constructively for a positive outcome to this Review Process that would address all provisions of the NPT in a balanced manner. If we are to preserve this instrument, let us not further disturb the delicate balance established in 1995, when we agreed to extend this Treaty indefinitely. We remain convinced that any exclusive focus on some preferred aspects of the Treaty do not serve our collective interests. Let us be reminded that the 1995 package of decisions was based on a reaffirmation of our rights and obligations under the Treaty as it concerns all three of its equally important pillars.

I thank you.