

South Africa

**DRAFT STATEMENT ON EFFECTIVE INTERNATIONAL ARRANGEMENTS TO ASSURE
NON-NUCLEAR-WEAPON STATES AGAINST THE USE OR THREAT OF USE OF
NUCLEAR WEAPONS**

VIENNA, ... 2007

(CHECK AGAINST DELIVERY)

Chairperson,

The concerns of non-nuclear-weapon States about their vulnerability from the use or threat of use of nuclear weapons are not new. In fact, it would also not be an exaggeration to say that these concerns are exacerbated in an era of greater international insecurity, particularly when taking into account the threats posed by weapons of mass destruction. In this regard, one need look no further than emerging approaches that would appear to increase the role of nuclear weapons as part of security strategies, including rationalizations for the use, and the possible development of new types, of nuclear weapons.

The issue of security assurances has a long history and continues to remain of importance to South Africa, as indeed it does to all non-nuclear-weapon States. The significance of security assurances has been recognised in many documents, including in the Final Document of the 2000 Review Conference of the Parties to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons when the Conference agreed "that legally binding security assurances by the five nuclear-weapon States to the non-nuclear-weapon States parties to the NPT strengthen the nuclear non-proliferation regime".

Chairperson,

Genuine security cannot be achieved by the non-nuclear-weapon States abandoning the nuclear weapons option alone. What is also required is for such States not to feel threatened by nuclear weapons. In this context, the Heads of State and Government of the Non-Aligned Movement has consistently reaffirmed that the total elimination of nuclear weapons is the only absolute guarantee against the use or threat of use of such weapons. They furthermore agree that, pending the total elimination of nuclear weapons, efforts for the conclusion of a universal, unconditional and legally binding instrument on security assurances to non-nuclear-weapon States should be pursued as a matter of priority.

South Africa regards the provision of security assurances as a key element of the Non-Proliferation Treaty. As the NPT is the primary nuclear non-proliferation agreement in terms of which the non-nuclear-weapon States have foregone the nuclear weapons option, it follows logically that security assurances should be provided under the Treaty. In South Africa's view, the negotiation of legally binding security assurances should therefore take place under the NPT umbrella within the context of the Strengthened Review Process of the Treaty.

Chairperson,

Given the importance that it attaches to the provision of security assurances, South Africa, together with its Partners in the New Agenda Coalition, already in 2003 tabled a Working Paper on the matter that examines questions, such as which States should provide assurances, the beneficiaries of security assurances, the nature and scope of the assurances to be provided, elements to be included in a legally binding instrument and the format in which security assurances should be provided. A draft Protocol or Agreement on the Prohibition of the Use or Threat of Use of Nuclear Weapons against Non-Nuclear-Weapon States Parties to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons was also provided.

In my delegation's view, the key concepts of the Working Paper remain valid, as does the continued need for the provision of negative security assurances to non-nuclear-weapon States to address their legitimate concerns that, in conjunction with their adherence to the NPT, further measures be undertaken to safeguard their security. In addition, the provision of security assurances will place a question mark over the continued possession of something that cannot be used.

The issue at stake is the granting of legally binding security assurances to the non-nuclear-weapon States parties to the NPT, thereby fulfilling the undertaking which should be given to the States that have voluntarily given up the nuclear-weapons option by becoming Parties to the Treaty. The negotiation of such assurances within the NPT context would in our view provide a significant benefit to the NPT Parties and could serve as an incentive to those who still remain outside the Treaty. We continue to believe that security assurances rightfully belong to those States that have foresworn the nuclear-weapons option, as opposed to those who still prefer to keep their options open.

In conclusion, Chairperson,

South Africa continues to hold the view that security assurances should be provided in the context of an internationally legally binding instrument, which could either be in the format of a separate agreement reached in the context of the NPT, or as a protocol to the Treaty. In this regard, we do not subscribe to the arguments by some that declarations that have been made by the nuclear-weapon States in the past are sufficient, particularly given the conditionalities that generally accompany these declarations. Neither do we believe that security assurances should only be granted in the context of nuclear-weapon-free zones, as we all know only too well that such zones can only come into existence in the absence of nuclear weapons anywhere in the zone.

South Africa believes that the primary undertaking not to aspire to nuclear weapons was made under the NPT. It therefore follows that security assurances should also be given in the context of, or as a part of, the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons.

I thank you, Chair.