



THE PERMANENT MISSION OF  
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TO THE UNITED NATIONS

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STATEMENT  
BY

SOUTH AFRICA

IN THE FIRST COMMITTEE  
OF THE 59<sup>TH</sup> SESSION  
OF THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY

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and views of others. In this regard South Africa is an original co-sponsor of the New Agenda Coalition (NAC) resolution on nuclear disarmament that will be submitted for the First Committee's consideration.

The Comprehensive Nuclear Test-Ban Treaty (CTBT) continues not to enter into force as a consequence of the non-ratification of the States required to do so. South Africa continues to view this treaty as an important measure to accomplish our common goals of nuclear disarmament and nuclear non-proliferation. It is for this reason that South Africa's Foreign Minister participated in the meeting of CTBT supporters held in New York last month and signed the Joint Ministerial Statement on the CTBT, which was issued at the conclusion of the meeting.

South Africa is equally concerned with the state of affairs in the UNDC and is of the view that the UNDC should not be subjected to the same paralyses as the CD. South Africa urges that the UNDC should be allowed to work in accordance to its mandate. We stress that any proposals regarding the work of the UN disarmament machinery should take into consideration - going work in the revitalisation of the United Nations.

It was also disappointing that the UN Panel of Governmental Experts on Missiles in all its Aspects was unable to agree on a consensus report. South Africa wishes to commend the Chair of the Panel, Mr Santiago Irazábal Mourão of Brazil for his untiring efforts to forge a consensus on the draft report. Notwithstanding this failure, South Africa continues to believe that the issue of missiles needs to be collectively addressed through the United Nations.

Chairperson,

South Africa fully recognises and supports the inalienable right of all states to utilise the atom for peaceful purposes only, in conformity with the rights and obligations contained in the NPT. As agreed at the 2000 NPT RevCon, "each country's choices and decisions in the field of peaceful uses of nuclear energy should be respected without jeopardising its policies or international co-operation agreements and arrangements for peaceful uses of nuclear energy and its fuel cycle policies".

South Africa believes that should we find, through recent experiences, that existing instruments are not adequate and the non-proliferation regime needs to be strengthened, this should be addressed collectively within the relevant technically competent and established multilateral institutions.

Whilst South Africa fully supports international efforts aimed at maximising the benefits of nuclear technology applications for peaceful purposes, particularly in the context of accelerating socio-economic development, the sustainability of the peaceful application of nuclear technology remains dependent on ensuring the safety and security of such programmes.

The International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA), through its technical co-operation activities, has the potential to make a substantial contribution to our efforts aimed at

accelerating sustainable socio-economic development, thereby contributing to the achievement of the Millennium Development Goals and the strategic objectives and programmes of the New Partnership for Africa's Development (NEPAD).

Chairperson,

My delegation notes with appreciation the commendable activities of the United Nations in the area of small arms and light weapons. It is for this reason among others that South Africa continues to attach great importance to the implementation of the UN Programme of Action to Prevent, Combat and Eradicate the Illicit Trade in Small Arms and Light Weapons in All its Aspects.

In an effort to give meaning to this principled position South Africa actively participated in the first meeting of the Open Ended Working Group (OEWG) to negotiate an international instrument to enable States to identify and trace, in a timely and reliable manner, illicit small arms and light weapons, that was held here in New York during June of this year. The interactive and constructive nature of the discussions in the OEWG have been encouraging and we look forward to the next meeting of the OEWG during January 2005. We will also follow future developments concerning the illicit brokering of small arms and light weapons with keen interest.

Furthermore and as in the past, South Africa and Japan – under the Co-ordination of Colombia – will this year again submit a resolution to address the Illicit trade in small arms and light weapons. We are hopeful that all Members will join the consensus on this extremely important and equally relevant matter.

Chairperson,

South Africa believes that strong regional commitments on the issue of anti-personnel mines reinforce national efforts in mine action. We are pleased therefore that the Common African Position on Anti-Personnel Landmines, adopted here in New York at the African Union Ministerial Meeting last month, sends a powerful message on Africa's implementation priorities in this field. South Africa believes that the Common African Position manages firstly to evaluate our achievements in Africa, and secondly to also recognise the challenges during the next five years, critical to these challenges being the need for us to intensify our efforts to mobilise resources to clear mined areas and assist those who have become victims of this lethal weapon. We continue to believe that these are the two key areas on which the First Review Conference for the Anti-Personnel Mine Ban Treaty (MBT), to be held in Kenya next month, should focus.

The Common Africa Position acknowledges that there are forty-eight African States Parties to the MBT, which emphasises the degree to which the Convention has been universalised in Africa and further underlines that the MBT has become the continental norm in eradicating anti-personnel mines. Amongst others, it also highlights the obligation on African States Parties to meet their stockpile destruction and mine clearance deadlines; on the need to enhance the assistance provided to mine victims and to provide for their

social and economic reintegration; to promote Inter-African Co-operation; as well as to further mobilise the international community in support of the continent's effort.

South Africa also welcomes the decision by the Meeting of States Parties to the Certain Conventional Weapons Convention (CCW) in November 2003 to adopt a legally binding instrument, Protocol V that deals with explosive remnants of war (ERW). While South Africa would have preferred the instrument not only to deal with post-conflict remedial measures, we wish to reiterate South Africa's understanding that a central element of the obligations of States Parties relating to co-operation and assistance are the provision of assistance for the care, rehabilitation and social and economic reintegration of victims of ERW. With the forthcoming November 2004 Group of Governmental Experts session, followed by the Meeting of States Parties to the CCW, we believe that the one area where we have been making progress is on the issue of compliance. South Africa wishes to thank those delegations that have expressed support for its proposal on the issue.

Chairperson,

As is the case with the other weapons of mass destruction, the possibility that biological weapons could be used, remains a source of concern for my delegation. South Africa was therefore honoured to have been able to Chair the last Meeting of Experts that was held in Geneva during July of this year to inter alia discuss and promote common understanding and effective action on enhancing international capabilities for responding to, investigating and mitigating the effects of cases of alleged use of biological or toxin weapons or suspicious outbreaks of disease.

In my delegation's view, much was achieved in focusing and streamlining the valuable information gained from the presentations and interventions made by a large number of participants.

In conclusion, Chairperson,

This Committee has the responsibility to collectively address concerns related to the threat of weapons of mass destruction as well as conventional arms. In fulfilling this responsibility it is also incumbent upon us to agree collectively to actions that will contribute to and promote international peace and security. This responsibility should guide us in our efforts to revitalise or rationalise the work of the First Committee, which should be undertaken in an integrated and comprehensive manner in line with its mandate. In this regard, South Africa welcomes the initiative by the President of the General Assembly to streamline the work of the General Assembly, and the efforts made by Ambassador Sareva to strengthen the work of the Committee. My delegation would also recall the proposals that it made in this regard at our meeting last year.

Chairperson, I thank you.