

EXPLANATION OF VOTE BY THE DELEGATION OF SOUTH AFRICA ON RESOLUTION L.7

Thank you, Mr. Chairperson,

I take the floor to explain my delegation's abstention on draft resolution L.7 entitled "Conclusion of effective international arrangements to assure non-nuclear weapon States against the use or threat of use of nuclear weapons".

At the outset, I wish to place on record that the issue of security assurances continues to remain of great importance to South Africa. My delegation has often stated that genuine security cannot be achieved by the non-nuclear-weapon States abandoning the nuclear weapons option alone and pointed out that what is also required, is for such States not to feel threatened by nuclear weapons. Pending the total elimination of nuclear weapons, South Africa therefore shares the view that 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.

Mr. Chairperson,

It is, however, South Africa's belief 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. Because 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 logically follows that security assurances should be provided under the NPT. This is unfortunately not reflected in resolution L.7.

In South Africa's view, the negotiation of legally binding security assurances should take place under the NPT umbrella within the context of the Strengthened Review Process of the Treaty. The negotiation of NSAs within the NPT context – as opposed to the suggestions contained in resolution L.7 – would in our view provide a significant benefit to the NPT States Parties and could serve as an incentive to those who still remain outside the Treaty.

As 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 that Treaty, my delegation therefore abstained on resolution L.7.

I thank you, Mr. Chairperson.