



**STATEMENT
BY**

**MR. LUVUYO NDIMENI
DEPUTY PERMANENT REPRESENTATIVE
SOUTH AFRICAN MISSION TO THE
UNITED NATIONS, GENEVA**

**SOUTH AFRICAN NATIONAL STATEMENT
FIRST COMMITTEE
THEMATIC DEBATE ON
NUCLEAR WEAPONS**

**UNITED NATIONS
NEW YORK
15 OCTOBER 2009**

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DRAFT STATEMENT BY SOUTH AFRICA DURING THE THEMATIC DEBATE ON NUCLEAR WEAPONS AT THE FIRST COMMITTEE OF THE 64TH SESSION OF THE UNITED NATIONS GENERAL ASSEMBLY

Chairperson,

As mentioned in our earlier statement during the General Debate, we have in the recent past witnessed an increasing number of positive pronouncements by States and their leaders in relation to nuclear disarmament. These statements, which included renewed commitments to nuclear disarmament and the elimination of nuclear weapons, are indeed welcome developments.

It is imperative that these positive statements be translated into concrete actions in order to restore confidence in the nuclear disarmament and nuclear non-proliferation regime that has been subjected to significant tensions during the past decade. Such actions should not only entail reductions in the number of nuclear weapons that continue to be deployed and are stockpiled around the world, but should also include a review of security doctrines, as well as other transparent, irreversible measures aimed at realising our common objective of a world free from nuclear weapons.

Chairperson,

The recent Security Council Summit also came at a time of both encouraging new developments and enduring challenges in the field of nuclear disarmament and nuclear non-proliferation. Whilst South Africa welcomes this endeavour by the Security Council to contribute to a new, more balanced approach to address the challenges related to nuclear disarmament and nuclear non-proliferation it should, however, be noted that South Africa has consistently argued that any presumption of the indefinite possession of nuclear weapons will only lead to increasing insecurity and a continuing arms race. Continuous and irreversible progress in nuclear disarmament and other related nuclear arms control measures therefore remain fundamental to the promotion of nuclear non-proliferation.

For South Africa, the NPT remains the cornerstone of nuclear disarmament and nuclear non-proliferation and we will continue to promote its universality. In our view, the Treaty, as well as all the outcomes of its Review Conferences, remains as valid as ever and together form the basis for progress in the Treaty's review process. States Parties to the NPT should therefore avoid the temptation to selectively apply obligations provided for under the Treaty and commitments made during Review Conferences. We remain particularly concerned about the lack of progress following the unequivocal undertaking by the nuclear-weapon States to accomplish the total elimination of their nuclear arsenals leading to nuclear disarmament agreed to at the 2000 NPT Review Conference.

Nonetheless, South Africa welcomes the positive outcomes of the Third Preparatory Meeting for the 2010 Review Conference of the NPT, which inter alia agreed upon the Agenda and the Organisation of work for the 2010 Review

Conference. In this connection, South Africa urges all States Parties to engage constructively in order to achieve a positive outcome to the 2010 Conference that would consolidate and build upon the commitments reached at the 1995 and 2000 Review Conferences.

Chairperson,

With regard to the issue of security assurances, South Africa continues to believe that such assurances rightfully belong to those States that have foresworn the nuclear-weapons option, as opposed to those who prefer to keep their options open. The NPT is the primary international legal instrument under which the non-nuclear-weapon States have foregone the nuclear weapons option. South Africa therefore regards the provision of internationally legally binding security assurances as a key element of the NPT and we will consequently continue to pursue negative security assurances within that framework. Legally binding security assurances will enhance strategic stability, facilitate the process of the elimination of nuclear weapons and contribute to international confidence and security.

Chairperson,

South Africa continues to support the establishment of Nuclear-Weapon-Free-Zones. In this regard, South Africa is proud of the entry into force of the Pelindaba Treaty on 15 July 2009, which establishes a Nuclear-Weapon-Free-Zone in Africa. This is not only a significant achievement for Africa, but also for a Southern Hemisphere free from nuclear weapons. In this context, we call upon those States that have not yet done so to sign and ratify the relevant Protocols attached to the Treaty at the earliest opportunity.

South Africa also welcomes the entry into force of the Central Asia Nuclear Weapon Free Zone on 21 March 2009 and hopes that these important developments will be followed by concerted international efforts to create NWFZs in other regions, including in the Middle East.

Chairperson,

The peaceful application of nuclear energy is of particular importance to many developing countries, given the urgent need for sustainable and accelerated economic growth. This rise in the demand for nuclear power comes with challenges and responsibilities that require the international community to be vigilant in ensuring that nuclear energy is utilised for peaceful purposes only. In this connection, South Africa strongly believes that the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) should be provided with the necessary means to carry out not only its verification mandate, but also to enhance its technical cooperation activities and assistance in a non-discriminatory, efficient and professional manner.

At the same time, we need to ensure that no unwarranted restrictions are imposed on states in full compliance with their obligations. Further modalities for preventing the diversion of these sensitive technologies may be required in

order to ensure that we can pursue such activities without fear and with the necessary assurances. However, what is required is a non-discriminatory approach that would assure a reliable supply of nuclear fuel, whilst fully respecting the choices of States and protecting their inalienable right to pursue peaceful nuclear activities, consistent with their non-proliferation obligations.

Chairperson,

The Agency is the only internationally recognised competent authority responsible for verifying and assuring compliance with safeguards agreements, with a view to preventing the diversion of nuclear energy from peaceful uses to nuclear weapons or other nuclear explosive devices. This authority should not be undermined and any concerns regarding non-compliance with safeguards agreements should be directed to the IAEA for consideration of any actions that may be required in accordance with its statutory mandate. South Africa will continue to support activities aimed at strengthening and developing verification capabilities to provide assurances of compliance with nuclear disarmament agreements for the achievement and maintenance of a nuclear-weapon-free world.

In conclusion, Chairperson,

Allow me to merely state the obvious, namely that the systematic and progressive elimination of all nuclear weapons and the assurance that they will never be produced again remains the only guarantee against their use. This should firmly remain our goal.

I thank you, Chairperson.

