



African Commission on Nuclear Energy

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Statement to the

*63rd GENERAL CONFERENCE
OF THE INTERNATIONAL ATOMIC ENERGY AGENCY
Vienna, 16 – 20 September 2019*

Delivered by

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Executive Secretary of the African Commission on Nuclear Energy*

Madam President,

The African Commission on Nuclear Energy (AFCONE) Delegation would like to congratulate you on your election as the President of the 63rd Regular Session of the IAEA General Conference. We assure you of the AFCONE and the African Union Commission full support and cooperation towards the success of this Conference and the Implementation of its resolutions.

We are sure that, under your leadership, this Conference will attain its objectives.

We also would like to associate our Voice to the Former Speakers by expressing our sincere condolences to the IAEA and to the government and people of Japan over the death of Ambassador Yukiya Amano.

The late Director General had always a special interest to the Africa continent targeting the IAEA contribution to its Socio-Economic Development, for the benefit of the 26 Less Developed Countries (LDCs).

AFCONE has learned the recent passing of HE, the South African Deputy Minister of Mineral Resources and Energy, Ms Bavelile Hlongwa and wishes to express its deepest condolences to the Government of the Republic of South Africa.

Madam President,

The African Nuclear-Weapon-Free Zone Treaty, also known as the Pelindaba Treaty, was signed in Cairo on 11 April 1996 and entered into force on 15 July 2009.

Africa is proud to be celebrating this year the 10th anniversary of the Entry into force of the treaty.

This Treaty has been signed by 52 African Member States and Ratified by 41.

The Treaty, for which the African Union Commission is the depositary, prohibits the development, manufacture, stockpiling, acquisition, testing, possession, control or stationing of nuclear explosive devices in the Zone territory of States parties and the dumping of radioactive waste in the African Zone. It also prohibits any attack against nuclear installations in the Zone by the parties and requires them to maintain the highest standards of physical protection of nuclear material, facilities and equipment, which are to be used exclusively for peaceful purposes.

The Treaty of Pelindaba (Article 12) establishes the African Commission on Nuclear Energy as the body responsible for, inter alia, ensuring States parties' compliance with their obligations under the Treaty and the Protocols thereto and promoting cooperation in the peaceful, safe and secure uses of nuclear science and technology in the continent, as well as advancing global disarmament and non-proliferation efforts.

Madam President,

Nuclear disarmament, non-proliferation and the peaceful uses of nuclear energy are therefore firmly entrenched in the Pelindaba Treaty.

Nuclear Science and Technology are issues of special interest to Africa. In this regard, African States are implementing, with the strong and continuous support of the IAEA, national and regional programmes, including through the African Regional Cooperative Agreement for Research, Development and Training related to Nuclear Science and Technology (AFRA) on peaceful nuclear applications in the spheres of Human Health, Agriculture and Animal Health, Water Resources, Industry, Environment, Energy Planning and Nuclear Power.

Peaceful uses of nuclear energy will continue to make contributions to African States in meeting their developmental needs and goals.



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In addition, the Pelindaba Treaty permits the IAEA to verify the processes of dismantling and destruction of nuclear explosive devices. This provision calls for the conclusion of comprehensive safeguards agreements with the IAEA for purposes of verification of peaceful use activities.

Nuclear Technology is annually the subject of a comprehensive overview report submitted by the IAEA to its Member States during the General Conference. In addition, a resolution on strengthening the IAEA's activities related to nuclear science, technology and applications is annually discussed, updated and approved.

The IAEA Technical Cooperation programme in Africa, is elaborated to meet the region's specific development needs and priorities.

AFCONE identified, according to the Pelindaba Treaty Provisions, the following fields of activities, as the main priorities:

- ✓ Nuclear applications in human health,
- ✓ Radioactive waste management and control of non-import on the continent,
- ✓ Nuclear safety and safeguards and nuclear material accounting and control,
- ✓ Verification, information processing and monitoring technologies,
- ✓ Setting up legal and institutional framework for nuclear security and safety, including to address the obligations of State Parties regarding international Conventions and Treaties on radiological and nuclear safety,
- ✓ Partnership building at regional and international levels.

AFCONE aims to support nuclear research and training activities with an emphasis on continually improving, in the field, the nuclear safety, security and safeguards, especially to contribute to the integration of the nuclear power within the regional energy mix system in a safe, efficient and secure manner.

- **In the Field of Nuclear Power:** more than 10 African Member States are implementing technical cooperation projects with the IAEA in this Field. INIR Missions have been organized in the majority of these countries during the recent years.
 - We are looking forward to the interesting conclusions and recommendations of the International Conference organised by the IAEA next October on "Climate Change and the Role of Nuclear Power",
 - AFCONE is planning to organise in Africa in 2020, a regional conference on energy and nuclear power, in close cooperation with the African Union Commission Infrastructure and Energy Department and the support of international partners, including the IAEA.
- **Most of the African Member States are implementing and/or considering national technical projects in the field of cancer therapy:** medical imaging, nuclear medicine, radiotherapy departments, dosimetry laboratories and training qualified medical physicists,

- AFCONE express its deep appreciation to the IAEA Secretariat, for the selection of this important topic (nuclear technology in the fight against cancer) for the 2019 scientific forum,
 - AFCONE, is planning the organization, in close cooperation with the AUC/ Social Affairs Department and all the regional and international partners (IAEA (NA, PACT, TC), International and African Research Centres, WHO...), in conjunction to the African Union Summit to be held in Addis Ababa, next February 2020, a regional seminar in Fighting Cancer in Africa, taking into account the high burden created by this disease and observed in the Continent,
- **The management of radioactive wastes** is considered as a priority, when developing peaceful nuclear applications, according to the IAEA recommendations and international standards.
 - According to the provisions of the Pelindaba Treaty (Article 07) and in close cooperation with the UN Environment Programme, and the support of international partners, AFCONE will implement, with continuous follow up, regional projects related to the development of modern management of radioactive wastes in Africa.
 - **The implementation of independent national regulatory authorities**, through education and training of national regulatory authorities in the field of nuclear legislation and regulations.
 - For the sustainability of the programmes and in cooperation with International Partners, including the IAEA, AFCONE will develop Nuclear Law Training Courses in Africa, through identified selected African National Regulatory Authorities and Qualified Universities.
 - **Several Regional Centres of Excellence in Nuclear Security** are operational. They have been identified and supported by International Partners. These cooperation with, *in particular*, advanced European Centres, will be strengthened to fully implement the Pelindaba Treaty Provisions. We are looking forward to participating to the Ministerial Conference on Nuclear Security: Sustaining and Strengthening Efforts (ICONS 2020) organised by the IAEA in February 2020.
 - **The implementation and operationalisation of National State Systems of Accounting for and Control of Nuclear Material (SSACs) for Nuclear Safeguards**, is one of the priorities of AFCONE, allowing the African States Parties to fulfil with their obligations according to the Comprehensive Safeguards Agreements (CSAs) signed with the IAEA:
 - AFCONE organised in June 2019, in Pretoria (South Africa), the first Joint Workshop with the IAEA Safeguard Department. It will be followed by others in 2020.
 - The organisation of similar events is considered with other International Partners (EU, USA...).
 - According to the Pelindaba Treaty, AFCONE aims to make full use of the regional expertise and infrastructure in Africa: Some Advanced Laboratories are being identified and selected to play a regional role in this field: delivery of services (training, expert missions...), analysis, quality...



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The IAEA remains the only internationally recognized competent authority responsible for verifying and assuring compliance with NPT safeguards agreements, concluded in compliance with their obligations as stipulated in Article III of the Treaty. An effective safeguards system is an important building bloc in the nuclear non-proliferation regime and the international peace and security architecture.

- **The AFCONE programme puts a strong emphasis on developing nuclear skills and competence:**
 - To achieve these objectives, the nuclear research activities will be supported by AFCONE, in close cooperation with the Science and Technology African Union Department, and other development partners,
 - The african networks working in the field (safety, security, education & training, research reactors, particle accelerators...) need to be consolidated and optimally utilized by the African Member States,
 - The Education & Training Programme in Nuclear Science & Technology, to be implemented within Excellent Recognised African Universities, Institutes and Research Centres, including members of AFRANEST, should allow the appropriate paradigm shift in the Continent.
- To complement the aforementioned programmes, AFCONE, in close cooperation with the IAEA, AFRA, CTBTO and other International Partners, will support nuclear research and training activities with an emphasis on:
 - Sustaining the development of peaceful nuclear applications,
 - Continually improving nuclear safety, security and safeguards.

I am pleased to announce the Signature this Week of a Practical Arrangements (PAs) between the IAEA and AFCONE, strengthening the Cooperation in Safe and Secure Implementation in Africa of Peaceful Nuclear Applications.

Madam President,

According to the spirit and the letter of the African Union Agenda 2063, which represent for the African Commission on Nuclear Energy, the main long term reference for its Strategic Plans, a special attention will be accorded to the Youth and Women in Nuclear, through close collaboration with the regional organisations already in place (African Young Generation in Africa and Women in Nuclear Global and Africa).

This programme will allow to address, gradually and in time, the future challenging needs of qualified personnel, in the field of nuclear sciences and applications.

Madam President,

Next year marks the 50th anniversary of the entry into force of the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT). We re-affirm from this tribune, the central role of nuclear-weapon-

free zones in the consolidation of the NPT, as well as in their contributions to addressing nuclear disarmament and non-proliferation across all regions of the world.

The recent seminar organised on 28 & 29 August 2019 at Nur Sultan (Kazakhstan) by the United Nations on Disarmament Affairs (UNODA) and the Government of the Republic of Kazakhstan, on “Fostering Cooperation and Enhancing Consultation Mechanisms among the Existing Nuclear Weapon Free Zones”, seminar to which AFCONE took actively part, is a very constructive initiative to be encouraged by the UNODA and all the International Partners, including the IAEA, through Interregional activities related to these Zones.

Madam President,

The Signatories to the Pelindaba Treaty, recognize that the establishment of other NWFZs, especially in the Middle East, would enhance the security of States Parties to the African NWFZ. We, then, reiterate our deep concern at the lack of progress towards the implementation of the 1995 resolution on the Middle East, which was an integral and essential part of the package of decisions and the basis upon which consensus was reached on the indefinite extension of the NPT.

We also restate our disappointment over the failure to implement the Action Plan of the 2010 NPT Review Conference regarding the establishment of a Middle East zone free from nuclear weapons and other weapons of mass destruction. We wish to reiterate then the continued validity of the 1995 resolution on the Middle East until its full implementation.

In Conclusion Madam President,

The 2010 NPT Review Conference produced conclusions and recommendations for follow-on actions in the areas of nuclear disarmament, nuclear non-proliferation, peaceful uses of nuclear energy and particularly implementation of the 1995 Resolution on the Middle East.

The 64 actions contained in the action plan and the practical steps for the Middle East adopted by the 2010 Review Conference of the Parties to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons, together with the Final Documents of the 1995 and 2000 Review Conferences, represent the NP Treaty's latest acquis.

Those States not yet party to the African NWFZ Treaty are encouraged to complete their ratification or accession procedures as soon as possible to enable all African States to be party to the Pelindaba Treaty.

The Parties to the Protocols of the Pelindaba Treaty are encouraged to cooperate with AFCONE in order to fulfill the gaps identified and sustain the development of the qualified human resources in the region.

The specific role of AFCONE-AUC, the IAEA and the CTBTO, as well as the coordination and cooperation between these Organizations, is essential for the full implementation of the Nuclear-Weapon-Free Zone in Africa.

I express my sincere thanks to the African Groups based, in particular, in Vienna, Geneva and New York, for their cooperation and support to the African Commission on Nuclear Energy (AFCONE)

I Thank You Madame President.