



OPANAL
Agency for the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons in Latin America and the Caribbean

General Conference

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Agenda Item 6

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Statement of African Commission on Nuclear Energy (AFCONE)

Your Excellency the President of the OPANAL General Conference,

Your Excellency the OPANAL Secretary General,

*Honourable Leaders of the States Parties to the Latin America and Caribbean Nuclear
Weapon-Free Zone Treaty,*

*Excellencies and High-Level Representatives of International and Regional agencies and
partners,*

Ladies and Gentlemen,

Please Accept my warm greetings from Pretoria (South Africa).

On behalf of the States Parties to the African Nuclear Free Zone Treaty (Treaty of Pelindaba), I thank the Agency for the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons in Latin America and the Caribbean (OPANAL) for the invitation to attend this General Conference

Africa is very honoured to join you all during this 27th Session of the OPANAL General Conference, demonstrating the long and effective implementation of nuclear disarmament and non-proliferation programmes in the Zone, as a Leader Model for the Other NWFZs. So, Congratulations to all States Parties to the Treaty of Tlatelolco.

Excellencies, Ladies and Gentlemen,

As discussed, several times with HE the OPANAL Secretary General and the OPANAL Representatives met in Vienna, Algiers and Nur Sultan: We assure you of the AFCONE cooperation towards the successful implementation of our Joint Peace and Security Global Objectives and Promotion & Development of Safe and Secure Peaceful Uses of Nuclear Energy.

Africa commemorated this year the 12th Anniversary of the Entry into force of the treaty and the 25th Anniversary of the Opening for Signature of the Treaty.

This Treaty has been signed by 52 African Member States and Ratified by 42.

The Treaty of Pelindaba 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

Four Conferences of State Parties have been already organised since 2010 within the African Union Headquarters in Addis Ababa (Ethiopia). The AFCONE is organising the 5th CSP on 21 & 22 October 2021 in Johannesburg (South Africa), close to the AFCONE Premises.

The Commission has already invited OPANAL to attend this important event.

Excellencies, Ladies and Gentlemen,

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

AFCONE is therefore calling for the development of peaceful uses of nuclear energy including between the NWFZs with the Efficient Support of the IAEA (and Other Development Partners) under the Interregional Programmes.

The global COVID-19 pandemic has reminded the international community about the global catastrophic risks (in particular the CBRN Ones) and the consequences of non- appropriate priority allocation to Risk Management Issues at the national, continental, and global levels.

Today, I would like to briefly highlight the current status in Africa related to the Member States efforts and opportunities towards our common goal of non-proliferation, elimination of nuclear weapons and nuclear safety and security:

- The majority of the 55 African Member States are Parties to the NPT (53), the Pelindaba Treaty (42) and the CTBT (47),
- 47 are members to the IAEA and have concluded Comprehensive Safeguards Agreements with the Agency,
- 42 have developed with the IAEA and approved their Integrated Nuclear Security Support Plans (INSSPs),
- 25 (over 118) are parties to the Convention for the Suppression of Acts of Nuclear Terrorism (39 Signatories),
- 09 (over 56) are Parties to the Treaty Prohibiting Nuclear Weapons (TPNW) (29 Signatories over 86),

We are all proud to observe the current situation created by the NWFZs: the entire southern hemisphere is now an area free of nuclear weapons. Unfortunately, the threat of nuclear conflict still remains a reality today.

As You well know, Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty (CTBT) and Nuclear- Weapon-Free Zones (NWFZs) have complementary objectives, shared concerns, and a common vision : The use of the atom for peace and development. Africa plays already key role in the CTBT verification regime as it is the region with the largest number of States hosting monitoring facilities. I am pleased to inform you in this regard about the signature last July 2021 of a Cooperation Practical Arrangements (PAs) with the CTBTO, including for the Universalisation of the Treaties and the Entry into Force of the CTBT.

As the largest zone by number of Signatories and Parties, Pelindaba provides an additional value and unique perspective for the discussions on creating a similar zone in the Middle East: The AFCONE reaffirms its full support to the United Nations Efforts for the

establishment of a zone free of nuclear and all other weapons of mass destruction in the Middle East, as agreed at the 1995 NPT Review Conference.

As we convened in Nur Sultan in August 2019; inter-zonal cooperation is more critical than ever. I am pleased to note in the Agenda of this General Conference the Item 08 on the Cooperation Memorandum of Understanding between OPANAL and AFCONE.

This Achievement will foster the Inter-Zones Coordination in Preparation to the 10th Review Conference of the NPT planned in January 2022, and the 1st Conference of the Parties to the Treaty Prohibiting Nuclear Weapons (TPNW) planned in March 2022. We look forward to continued collaboration with all Nuclear Weapon Free Zones on this important Conferences.

In Conclusion Excellencies, Ladies and Gentlemen,

In addition to its mandate and programme related to Nuclear Disarmament and Non-Proliferation, under implementation with the UN-ODA, the AU Peace and Security Council (AU PSC) and the African Union Commission Political Affairs, Peace and Security Department (PAPS), the AFCONE fully supports the “Inalienable Right” to use nuclear energy for peaceful purposes.

We, therefore, support, without prejudice to the NPT Parties Obligations related to Articles I, II and III, the recent initiatives recommending more International financial support to peaceful uses of nuclear energy, in particular for the benefit of the LDCs.

I Thank You.