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**STATEMENT
BY**

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During the General Debate

of the

**2010 Review Conference of Parties to the Treaty on the
Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons**

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Thank you, Mr. President,

Please accept my delegation's congratulations on your election to preside over this important conference. At the outset, I also wish to associate myself with the statements delivered on behalf of the Non-Aligned Movement and the New Agenda Coalition.

Mr. President,

Recent positive developments in the disarmament and non-proliferation field would seem to indicate that the NPT may be heading out of its crisis. It is, nevertheless, at a crossroads. The task before us, is to reach a consensual outcome that would strengthen all three pillars of the NPT and reinforce the consensus agreements reached in 1995 and 2000. In this regard, we are aided by a number of common objectives and previously agreed to principles that serve as a firm foundation that, if we build on them wisely, should facilitate our task of finding a consensus that would address the challenges facing the NPT. Among these, I would like to highlight the following:

- 1) We all agree that under the NPT's "Grand Bargain", the five nuclear-weapon States agreed to legally-binding commitments to pursue nuclear disarmament on the basis of which the non-nuclear-weapon States entered into legally-binding commitments not to receive, manufacture or otherwise acquire nuclear weapons or other nuclear explosive devices. In this regard, we all share the view that the unequivocal undertaking to nuclear disarmament made during the 2000 NPT Review Conference should be reaffirmed as the foundation for a step-by-step process which would reduce the threat posed by nuclear weapons, de-emphasise their importance and lead to their elimination.
- 2) We also all agree on the need to build upon the unequivocal undertaking made by the nuclear-weapon States to accomplish the total elimination of their nuclear arsenals in a concrete, transparent, irreversible and verifiable manner in accordance with Article VI of the NPT.
- 3) We furthermore all agree that the full implementation of all non-proliferation commitments are undoubtedly of importance, but that the achievement of genuine security requires a similar commitment to the full implementation of all Treaty provisions under the other two equally important pillars of the Treaty, namely nuclear disarmament and the peaceful uses of nuclear energy. Nuclear disarmament and nuclear non-proliferation are inextricably linked and mutually reinforcing and we should underline that progress on both fronts is required to attain the goal of a world free from the scourge of nuclear weapons.
- 4) We all fully share the conviction that the IAEA is the only internationally recognised competent authority responsible for verifying and assuring compliance with safeguards agreements of States Parties, concluded in compliance with their obligations under the NPT. In this regard, we should be able to agree that the strengthened safeguards

system is an essential element of collective efforts to address the threat posed by the proliferation of nuclear weapons.

- 5) In both the 1995 and 2000 Conferences, NPT States Parties already committed to the strengthening of IAEA safeguards. Whilst the Additional Protocol is a voluntary measure, we could recognise its importance as a confidence building measure, especially with regard to those States with advanced nuclear programmes and facilities. The Additional Protocol is an indispensable instrument, which enables the IAEA to provide credible assurances regarding the absence of undeclared nuclear material.
- 6) The “peaceful uses of nuclear energy” pillar remains an essential component of the NPT. The Treaty itself describes the use of nuclear energy for peaceful purposes as an “inalienable right” and the peaceful application of nuclear energy is of particular relevance and importance to developing countries, given the need for sustainable and accelerated economic growth. The Conference should therefore underscore that the non-proliferation aspects of the Treaty will not be used as a tool to deny access to countries – particularly developing countries – to the peaceful use of nuclear energy and also reaffirm the paramount importance of the promotional role of the Agency, as stipulated in Article II of the IAEA Statute, as well as Article III (3) of the NPT. This promotional role can only be effectively fulfilled with additional resources being provided to the Agency.
- 7) Nuclear Weapon-Free Zones (NWFZs), as envisaged in Article VII of the Treaty, remain an important aspect of the nuclear disarmament and nuclear non-proliferation process. We should agree on measures to implement, as a matter of urgency, the 1995 Resolution on the Middle East. We should also support the creation of new and additional NWFZs in other parts of the world. The Conference should furthermore urge all relevant States to sign and ratify the Protocols to the already existing NWFZs. An important precedent of a “nuclear-weapon-free State” already exists that could also be built upon by other States.
- 8) In order to strengthen the nuclear non-proliferation regime and build upon the 2000 Final Document, we should support the provision of legally-binding security assurances to States that have foregone the nuclear weapons option under the NPT.
- 9) On nuclear weapons testing, we should agree on the vital importance of signatures and ratifications, without delay and without conditions and in accordance with constitutional processes, to achieve the soonest entry into force of the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test Ban Treaty (CTBT), as a core element of the international nuclear non-proliferation and nuclear disarmament regime.
- 10) Recognising that the non-nuclear-weapon States under the NPT have already agreed to a legally-binding commitment not to produce fissile material for nuclear weapons or other nuclear explosive devices and the lack of progress on this issue in the Conference on Disarmament, we all should encourage the commencement of negotiations on a verifiable universal ban on the production of fissile material for

nuclear weapons and other nuclear explosive devices, that would serve both nuclear disarmament and non-proliferation objectives.

- 11) Article X acknowledges the right of States to withdraw from the NPT in the exercise of their national sovereignty in certain defined circumstances and in accordance with the procedures set out in this article. The issue of withdrawal is a serious matter that needs to be considered, particularly in relation to the continued application of safeguards on material, equipment and technology already transferred.

Mr. President,

The above is not meant to be an exhaustive list, nor is it intended to detract from other important proposals already made by individual States or groups of States, but could serve as a framework of common understandings by all of us to address the challenges facing the NPT.

Regarding the NPT Review Process, South Africa is generally supportive of a strengthened Process that will enhance the effectiveness of the treaty in a cost effective manner and that would not duplicate existing efforts. We should, however, take care that undue emphasis on procedural matters do not detract from our discussions and negotiations on matters of substance, which is our core business.

Mr. President,

It would be fair to say that this 2010 NPT Review Conference has been preceded by developments that have contributed to an atmosphere of cautious optimism regarding the potential for substantive advances at this Review Conference. Among these development, we welcome positive signals from some of the nuclear-weapon States, including the new START agreement between the Russian Federation and the United States and the high-level Nuclear Security Summit, which reaffirmed the primary responsibility of States in the area of nuclear security and safety and the supportive role played by the IAEA, including by providing updated guidelines and promoting co-operation among States.

My delegation was pleased to note the renewed commitment expressed by the US Secretary of State on Monday to the elements of transparency, irreversibility and verifiability agreed to during the 2000 Review Conference. Whilst welcoming all steps aimed at fulfilling this undertaking, we urge all five nuclear-weapon States to also do their own part, as concrete measures towards implementing the practical steps agreed to in 2000 are long overdue by all of them.

The peaceful uses pillar of the NPT has always lacked the necessary resource base. We therefore attach great importance to the commitment made by the US at this conference and we hope that other countries, particularly developed states, would also contribute in a meaningful manner, thereby promoting sustainable development, achieving the Millennium Development Goals and addressing the poverty divide.

Other positive developments include the entry into force of the Semipalatinsk and Pelindaba NWFZ Treaties. The confirmation by one of the nuclear-weapon States that it has taken steps towards ratifying its participation in these zones is a positive development that other NWS and other relevant States should also do.

Mr. President,

This Conference will be a critical one for the disarmament and non-proliferation community insofar as it will be seen as a litmus test for the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Regime. The Conference will either witness positive reinforcement of the NPT, or a lack of progress that may serve as an indication of a stagnant process no longer able to achieve the goals it aspires to. We need to ensure that the Treaty is indeed strengthened in all its aspects in order to adequately address the challenges facing international peace and security today. We should not allow any decisions to be taken at this Review Conference which may infringe on the inalienable right of all States Parties to the verifiable peaceful application of nuclear energy, as provided for under the Treaty. The Treaty must be implemented in all its aspects without favour or prejudice. It may well be a difficult balance to maintain, but it is a balance that must nevertheless be achieved and maintained.

South Africa stands ready to work constructively with all delegations towards achieving a successful conclusion to this Conference. In order to accomplish this goal, my delegation is of the view that the elements highlighted above provide a framework that should be explored to promote a convergence of views among us all. Success in this endeavour will not only contribute to securing a better future for humanity, but will also promote international peace and security. What is required from all of us, is to display the necessary political will, flexibility and a spirit of co-operation to ensure that we turn the vision of a world without nuclear weapons into reality and can indeed proclaim "Atoms for peace only!".

I thank you, Mr President.