

REPUBLIC OF ZAMBIA



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Statement by the Deputy Minister of Foreign Affairs
Hon. Prof. Fashion Phiri, MP.

Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty Review Conference

3 – 28 May, 2010

United Nations Headquarters
New York
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Mr. President,

Let me join other speakers who have spoken before me, to congratulate you on your election to preside over this Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty Review Conference. My delegation is confident that you will direct proceedings to a successful conclusion and we wish to express our unreserved support during your tenure as Chair. My delegation also wishes to commend the secretariat on the excellent work done towards organising the conference. Zambia regards this event as an opportunity to strengthen our commitment towards attaining broader international peace and security.

Mr. President,

Zambia has always been a strong and committed advocate of general and complete disarmament. Therefore, we believe that the NPT is a major step towards the achievement of this goal.

Zambia welcomes the significant progress that has been made by the United States and Russia to work towards a legally binding treaty to further reduce their nuclear arsenals. We believe that this is indeed a good example. Accordingly, we would like to urge all the other nuclear weapon States to follow suit.

We are also encouraged by the United Kingdom and France on the cessation of the production of fissile materials for nuclear weapons. These steps are important in strengthening confidence-building measures. However, we believe that the total elimination of nuclear weapons should be the ultimate goal of nuclear disarmament. This matter is critical to our existence as a human race. Thus we feel obliged to join the rest of the world in discussing a matter of such magnitude.

Mr. President,

As you are aware, African states are all party to the NPT and have agreed to declare our continent a nuclear-weapons-free-zone through the Treaty of Pelindaba. This, we believe, is the best way to reduce global security tensions and above all, a means through which confidence can be strengthened among states. In this regard, I am pleased to inform the conference that Zambia is now in the final stages of ratifying the Pelindaba Treaty. Zambia welcomes efforts being deployed in other regions to strengthen their own nuclear-weapons-free-zone treaties. We therefore look forward to seeing the Middle East Nuclear Weapon Free Zone becoming a reality.

Mr. President,

The threat of nuclear terrorism is real and it is imperative that all States cooperate to ensure that terrorists do not have access to nuclear weapons. As such, Zambia supports all international efforts aimed at deterring nuclear terrorism.

Mr. President,

Zambia supports the right of states to utilise nuclear technology for peaceful purposes. As a country that has potential uranium reserves, Zambia will be looking to exploiting this resource for her national development. Nuclear energy is fast becoming an alternative which could mitigate the challenges posed by climate change. We see the exploitation of uranium as a possible means to addressing some of the energy challenges. However, Zambia is aware that there are a number of challenges that come with harnessing uranium including physical security, disposal and storage of waste. In this regard, Zambia will be looking to both regional and international partnerships on how to safely exploit nuclear technology.

Mr. President

In light of the foregoing, my Government supports the work of the International Atomic Energy Agency and calls for the strengthening of the Additional Protocol. It is for this reason that Zambia signed the Additional Protocol on 13th May 2009 and is now actively working towards domesticating the instrument. In the same vein, Zambia looks forward to the signing and ratification of the Comprehensive Nuclear Test Ban Treaty by Annex 2 states for it to enter into force without further delay.

Mr. President,

It is gratifying to note that nuclear-weapons States have embraced the spirit of providing security assurances to those states such as mine that are non-nuclear weapons states. I wish to state, however, that security assurances do not negate the threat of a nuclear attack, whose consequences are too ghastly to contemplate as witnessed in the case of Hiroshima and Nagasaki.

Mr. President,

As I conclude, I would like to reiterate the importance of bringing the other members of the international community into the Treaty. Zambia calls upon those countries that have not signed and ratified the NPT to do so in order that the treaty attains universality. Furthermore, Zambia calls upon annex 2 states to sign and ratify the Comprehensive Nuclear Test Ban Treaty. Such a step will, in addition to strengthening the nuclear non proliferation regime, also effectively eliminate the further manufacturing of nuclear weapons.

I thank you.