

SOUTH AFRICA: NATIONAL STATEMENT FOR MAIN COMMITTEE II

SAFEGUARDS, NON-PROLIFERATION AND NUCLEAR WEAPON FREE ZONES

Chairperson,

My delegation associates itself with the statement delivered on behalf of the Non-Aligned Movement.

Safeguards contribute to mutual confidence in the peaceful nature of a State's nuclear activities and the absence of undeclared nuclear activities or material, which in turn would greatly facilitate the transfer of nuclear technology and use of nuclear energy to the benefit of developing countries. At the same time, it is essential that safeguards measures should not adversely affect the inalienable right to the peaceful use of nuclear energy as envisaged in Articles III and IV of the NPT.

Chairperson,

South Africa maintains its principled position that it is the obligation of States Parties to accept safeguards as required under Article III of the Treaty and urges all States that have yet to bring comprehensive safeguards agreements into force, to do so as soon as possible in order to achieve the universality of comprehensive safeguards.

While the Additional Protocol is not an obligation under the Treaty, it is nonetheless an indispensable instrument to enable the IAEA to provide credible assurances regarding the absence of undeclared nuclear material and activities. South Africa believes that whilst it is the sovereign decision of any State to conclude an Additional Protocol, once in force, is an important tool to provide the necessary confidence in the peaceful nature of a State's nuclear activities, especially with regard to States with advanced nuclear programmes and types of facilities. My delegation is encouraged to note that 124 Additional Protocols are now in force.

Chairperson,

South Africa further reiterates its conviction that the IAEA is the only internationally recognized competent authority responsible for verifying and assuring compliance with safeguards agreements of States Parties. As States Parties, we have all committed ourselves to provide the Agency with the necessary support and assistance to fulfil its safeguards and verification mandate.

South Africa has consistently expressed support for measures that would strengthen the safeguards system with a view to address the serious challenge posed by the proliferation of

nuclear weapons. We therefore actively participate in the discussions, consultations and decisions on improving the effectiveness and efficiency of the safeguards system in the IAEA policy making bodies, most recently on the so-called State Level Concept.

Welcome the IAEA Director General's assurance, as reflected in the IAEA General Conference Resolution GC(58)/RES/14, that the SLC "does not, and will not entail the introduction of any additional rights or obligations on the part of either the States or the Agency" and that the development and implementation of State-level approaches will be done in close consultation with the State concerned.

Chairperson,

South Africa recommends that the Conference reiterates that IAEA safeguards should be assessed and evaluated regularly and that decisions adopted by the IAEA policy bodies aimed at further strengthening the effectiveness and improving the efficiency of IAEA safeguards should be supported and implemented.

South Africa further recommends that the Conference reaffirms that the IAEA is the sole competent authority responsible for verifying the fulfilment of safeguards obligations assumed by States parties under the Non-Proliferation Treaty, with a view to preventing diversion of nuclear energy from peaceful uses to nuclear weapons and other nuclear explosive devices.

Chairperson,

South Africa takes note that in addition to their voluntary offer agreements, the five nuclear-weapon States have Additional Protocols in force, and that the IAEA found no indication of the diversion of nuclear material to which safeguards had been applied and that nuclear material to which safeguards had been applied, remained in peaceful activities.

However, the 2010 NPT Revcon agreed on specific actions aimed at strengthening the IAEA safeguards system, including through the development of appropriate legally binding arrangements to ensure the irreversible removal of fissile material designated by each nuclear-weapon State as no longer required for military purposes.

It is therefore disappointing that no progress has been made thus far for additional declarations of stockpiles of fissile material in excess of military requirements. My delegation also remains concerned about any withdrawals by the nuclear-weapon States of nuclear material from such selected facilities as provided for in their respective agreements. It is incumbent on the nuclear-weapon States to refrain from such withdrawals, and to apply the principles of irreversibility, verifiability and transparency in relation to their NPT obligations.

South Africa therefore recommends that the Conference:

Reiterates the call on for the wider application of safeguards to peaceful nuclear facilities in the nuclear-weapon States, in the relevant voluntary offer safeguards agreements, and stresses that comprehensive safeguards and additional protocols should be universally applied once the complete elimination of nuclear weapons have been achieved.

Supports furthering the establishment of safeguarded worldwide nuclear disarmament and the development of appropriate legally binding verification arrangements, within the context of the IAEA, to ensure the irreversible removal of fissile material from nuclear weapons or other nuclear explosive devices and to stress the statutory role of the IAEA on nuclear disarmament, including applying safeguards on nuclear materials derived from the dismantling of nuclear weapons.

Urges the nuclear-weapon States to commit to declaring to the IAEA all weapon-grade fissile material and to place such material, as soon as practicable, under the supervision of the Agency or other relevant international verification and arrangements for the use of such material for peaceful purposes, to ensure that such material remains permanently outside military programmes.

Chairperson,

We should all remain vigilant of the risks inherent in the continued existence of nuclear weapons, as well as those posed by nuclear terrorism, the illicit nuclear network and criminal acts aimed at using nuclear or other radioactive material for malicious acts. South Africa therefore remains committed to maintaining effective nuclear security of all nuclear material consistent with international obligations, and to cooperating with other States to raise nuclear security levels internationally.

In addition to its previous decisions on nuclear security issues, South Africa recommends that the Conference recognise that:

The primary responsibility for nuclear security rests with individual States;

The IAEA has a mandate and central role in the area of nuclear security, and

Any process to develop multilateral norms, guidelines or rules in nuclear security should be pursued within the framework of the IAEA and negotiated multilaterally in a gradual, inclusive and transparent manner incorporating the views of all Member States.

Chairperson,

South Africa continues to support the concept of nuclear-weapon-free zones and their establishment in all regions of the world, including in the Middle East.

Nuclear-Weapon-Free Zones play an important role in preventing the proliferation – both vertical and horizontal – of nuclear weapons. The establishment of internationally recognized nuclear-weapon-free zones on the basis of arrangements freely arrived at among the States of the region concerned enhances global and regional peace and security and constitute important steps to strengthen the nuclear disarmament and nuclear non-proliferation regime.

In view of the continued importance of power and non-power applications of nuclear energy, nuclear-weapon-free zone treaties could play an important role in promoting regional and sub-regional programmes for co-operation in the peaceful uses of nuclear science and technology.

The African Nuclear-Weapon-Free Zone Treaty (Pelindaba Treaty) has been ratified by 37 African States and South Africa looks forward to progress in this regard. We welcome the fact that four of the nuclear-weapon States have ratified the Treaty Protocols and encourage the remaining nuclear-weapon-State to complete its ratification process. We encourage the one non-nuclear weapon State that has yet to become party to Protocol III of the Treaty, to complete this process without delay.

Chairperson,

South Africa recommends that the Conference reaffirms that the establishment of nuclear-weapon-free-zones by the Treaties of Bangkok, Pelindaba, Rarotonga, Semipalatinsk and Tlatelolco, as well as Mongolia's nuclear-weapon-free status, represent a positive step towards attaining the Treaty objectives of nuclear disarmament and non-proliferation of nuclear weapons, and enhancing international peace and security.

I thank you.