



PERMANENT MISSION OF SOUTH AFRICA
TO THE UNITED NATIONS
333 EAST 38TH STREET 9TH FLOOR
NEW YORK, NY 10016
Tel: (212) 213-5583 Fax: (212) 692-2498
E-mail: pmun@southafrica-newyork.net

**STATEMENT
BY**

**AMBASSADOR XOLISA MABHONGO,
SOUTH AFRICAN PERMANENT REPRESENTATIVE TO
THE UNITED NATIONS, VIENNA**

**DURING THE UNGA65
FIRST COMMITTEE**

**THEMATIC DEBATE ON
NUCLEAR WEAPONS**

**UNITED NATIONS
NEW YORK
13 OCTOBER 2010**

Check against delivery

Chairperson,

My delegation fully associates itself with the statement delivered by Ireland on behalf of the New Agenda Coalition (NAC).

For South Africa, the NPT remains the cornerstone of the nuclear disarmament and nuclear non-proliferation regime and we will continue to promote its universality. We remain concerned about the selective approach adopted by some States that focus exclusively on some of the Treaty's provisions that are preferred over others and suit own agendas. South Africa believes that the vitality of the Treaty is dependent on the balance that should be maintained between its three mutually reinforcing pillars.

Chairperson,

While we remain particularly dissatisfied about the lack of progress towards nuclear disarmament in fulfillment of Article VI of the Treaty, we nonetheless welcome the outcome of the 2010 Review Conference of the NPT and the constructive spirit among States Parties that allowed us to adopt a Final Document. This represents an important milestone in the in the history of the Treaty.

South Africa welcomes the fact that the action plan was agreed to by consensus and that it reconfirms the validity of past agreements, including the unequivocal undertaking by the nuclear-weapon States to accomplish the total elimination of their nuclear arsenals leading to nuclear disarmament, thus paving the way, through a number of important new measures, towards achieving our goal of a world free from the threat posed by nuclear weapons.

It is imperative that these undertakings now be turned into concrete actions in order to restore confidence in the NPT which has been subjected to significant tensions during the last decade. Such actions should most importantly result in a fundamental review of security doctrines, as well as other transparent, irreversible and verifiable measures aimed at achieving a world free from the threat posed by nuclear weapons.

Chairperson,

One of the important elements included in the action plan is the commitment of States to support the development of appropriate legally-binding arrangements in the context of the IAEA to ensure the irreversible removal of material no longer required for military purposes. In this regard, we welcome the 30 August 2010 communication from the Russian Federation and the United States of America to the IAEA "concerning the management and disposition of plutonium designated as no longer required for defense purposes and related cooperation", with the goal of completing preparations for the necessary legally-binding agreements in 2011. Although the agreement only covers 34 metric tons of plutonium from each party, it sets an important precedent in fulfilment of the commitments made under the NPT. Of particular importance is the commitment to the implementation of verification measures by the IAEA with respect to each Party's disposition programme. It is our hope that this necessary step would be emulated by others and eventually include all fissile material designated by States as no longer required for military purposes.

Chairperson,

Other measures that were announced or agreed to before and during the Review Conference are also underway. In this regard, we call for the soonest ratification and implementation of the new START agreement, the earliest possible entry into force of

the Comprehensive Nuclear Test-Ban Treaty (CTBT), as well as the full and effective implementation of all 64 actions agreed to by consensus. We believe that the success of the 2010 Review Conference is dependent on the extent to which these decisions will be implemented. Our commitment to and compliance with these agreements and legal obligations will determine the continued vitality of the Treaty.

It is for this reason that we remain concerned about statements that are made from time to time by some nuclear-weapon States that seemingly aim at providing rationalisations for the continued retention and even possible use of these indiscriminate instruments of mass destruction. Such statements are not only irresponsible, but may also serve as rationale for those that may aspire to develop nuclear weapons. We have consistently argued that any presumption of the indefinite possession of nuclear weapons will only lead to increasing insecurity and a continuing arms race. Continuous and irreversible progress in nuclear disarmament and other related nuclear arms control measures remain fundamental to the promotion of nuclear non-proliferation.

Chairperson,

Pending the total elimination of all nuclear weapons, South Africa believes that those States that have foresworn the nuclear-weapons option have the right to demand security assurances, as opposed to those who prefer to keep their options open. The NPT is the primary international legal instrument under which the non-nuclear-weapon States have foregone the nuclear weapons option. South Africa therefore regards the provision of internationally legally binding security assurances as a key element of the NPT and we will consequently continue to pursue negative security assurances within that framework. Legally binding security assurances will enhance strategic stability, facilitate the process of the elimination of nuclear weapons and contribute to international confidence and security.

A further step towards the complete elimination of all nuclear weapons could include a legally-binding instrument banning the use or threat of use of nuclear weapons. Such an instrument would be consistent with the 1996 ICJ advisory opinion on the legality of the use or threat of use of nuclear weapons and could serve as a useful interim step towards total elimination.

South Africa continues to support the establishment of Nuclear-Weapon-Free-Zones in other parts of the world, including in the Middle East. In this regard, we welcome the decision of the 2010 NPT Review Conference aimed at the implementation of the 1995 Resolution on the Middle East and in particular the convening of a Conference in 2012.

Chairperson,

Let me reiterate that nuclear disarmament remains our highest priority. Nuclear weapons are a source of insecurity, not security. They are illegal, inhuman and immoral instruments that have no place in today's security environment – a new reality marked by growing interconnectedness and common threats that transcend traditional boundaries. This reality requires a different approach that takes into consideration not only the narrow national security interests of states, but also the shared, international and human security dimensions. My delegation was therefore pleased that the 2010 Review Conference expressed its deep concern at the catastrophic humanitarian consequences of any use of nuclear weapons, and that the Conference also reaffirmed the need for all States at all times to comply with international law, including international humanitarian law.

In order to establish the necessary framework to achieve and maintain a world without nuclear weapons, it is incumbent upon us all to begin timely preparations that will culminate in the negotiation of a nuclear weapons convention or a framework or set of instruments for the complete and sustainable elimination of nuclear weapons.

In conclusion, Chairperson,

In celebration of the first football World Cup ever held on African soil earlier this year, we used a Sesotho phrase meaning 'The time has come!' - Ke nako! This can very aptly be applied to the subject under consideration in this body. Let us agree: Nuclear Disarmament Ke nako! The time has come!

Thank you, Chairperson.

