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First Conference of State Parties of the African Nuclear Weapons Free Zone Treaty
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On behalf of the Executive Secretary of the Preparatory Commission for the Comprehensive Nuclear Test Ban Treaty Organization (CTBTO), I wish to express my deep appreciation for the opportunity to address this important and timely First Conference of State parties to the African Nuclear Weapons Free Zone Treaty. This conference again showcases the political and legal resolve of African nations to draw a line in the sand, and to unequivocally reaffirm their commitment to a world free of nuclear weapons.

Half a century after France detonated its first nuclear tests in Algeria, the symbolism attached to Pelindaba, which in Zula means "the matter or discussion is settled" - signals the end of the struggle to make Africa free of nuclear weapons. It also reflects the culmination of decades of efforts to legally free the entirety of the Southern Hemisphere from nuclear weapons and nuclear testing. In the Northern Hemisphere, nuclear weapons free areas, which include countries that have been victims of nuclear testing, are expanding to the borders of nuclear weapon States. This is of significant symbolic value. But for Africa, a nuclear weapons free world is no longer a Kilimanjaro shrouded in the mist, but a reachable mountaintop etched against Africa's blue skies. The desire by African nations and their citizens is clear: no nuclear weapons and no more nuclear testing.

Only a few months ago, the State parties to the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty (NPT) stood firm in their resolve to overcome their failure in 2005 and they granted the NPT a renewed lease to life. The 2010 NPT Review Conference welcomed the entry into force of the Pelindaba Treaty and affirmed that NWFZs enhance global and regional peace and security and strengthen the nuclear non-proliferation regime. The NPT parties at the same time affirmed the vital importance of the

entry into force of the Comprehensive Nuclear Test Ban Treaty (CTBT) as a core element of the nuclear disarmament and non-proliferation regime. However, transforming these solemn political affirmations and pronouncements into action will require dedicated leadership and the implementation of legally binding commitments. As such the CTBT and the African Nuclear Weapons Free Zone treaty represent legally binding undertakings towards making the world nuclear weapons free. What is required now is leadership at regional and global levels.

Nuclear Weapons Free Zones (NWFZs) and the CTBT are bound in spirit and letter. The grave human and environmental consequences of nuclear testing have been a key driving force behind the international community's quest to establish NWFZs. They also complement each other in that they both contain legal obligations to prohibit nuclear tests. While true that the CTBT has not yet legally entered into force, it is already effectively in force in all the States covered by existing NWFZs, including Africa. The Treaty now enjoys near universal support, boasting 182 signatory States and 153 ratifying States. The wide swath of countries under NWFZs along with CTBT Member States represent a significant portion of the globe committed to a nuclear free world. These States have demonstrated their recognition that adherence to these treaties buttresses the foundation of the non-proliferation regime and strengthens international peace and security.

The CTBT and its robust verification regime provide one of the key elements common in all existing NWFZs: a complete and verifiable ban on nuclear testing. As a disarmament measure, the CTBT provides a firm legal barrier against nuclear testing, thereby curbing the development of new types and new designs of nuclear weapons by possessors. It also contributes to nuclear non-proliferation by providing the final threshold on the road to nuclear weapons capacity. While the IAEA safeguards system remains the upstream compliance mechanism to verify peaceful nuclear programmes, the CTBT serves as a powerful downstream confidence building measure. Ratifying the CTBT therefore provides the final proof of a State's peaceful nuclear intentions.

As we look into the future, the CTBT represents an opportunity to build confidence and promote regional stability. Ratification of the treaty by all countries in the Middle East would be a key step in creating the right conditions for a Middle East nuclear weapon free zone. Creating such a zone will make a significant contribution to African and global security.

Apart from the security benefits to be gained from adhering to the CTBT and the African NWFZ, there are spillover benefits to be reaped from participation in these treaties. CTBT signatory states benefit from the civil and scientific applications of verification technologies, such as disaster warning. A partnership with the African Commission on Nuclear Energy will provide the ideal institutional framework to facilitate cooperation between members of both treaties on the uses of nuclear science and technology for peaceful purposes. The CTBTO Preparatory Commission stands ready to establish a formal relationship with the Commission.

The legal basis for the CTBT verification mechanism relies upon securing entry into force and making progress towards universalization with new ratifications. Nine Annex 2 States –those states required by the Treaty to ratify for it to enter into force – still need to do so. But, the signature and ratification of all States that have not yet done so, in particular in Africa, will continue to provide important momentum towards entry into force. It will serve as an expression of global confidence in the wider nonproliferation and disarmament regime.

Members of the Pelindaba treaty should have no conceivable political and security obstacles to ratifying the CTBT. Under the NPT, they already have a legal obligation not to develop nuclear weapons. The Pelindaba treaty further binds them legally not to test nuclear weapons or to allow nuclear testing on their territories. Yet, despite their obligations under the Pelindaba treaty, 5 of the 30 Pelindaba States Parties have not yet ratified the CTBT. Their ratification would provide a significant boost for the universalisation of the treaty and its entry into force. At the same time, out of the 38 African states that have ratified the CTBT, 14 have not yet ratified the Pelindaba treaty. Since these states are already bound by requirements under both the NPT and the CTBT, there should be no impediment for them to ratify the Pelindaba treaty without any delay.

To give true meaning to the symbolism represented in the name of the Pelindaba treaty, those who have not yet ratified the treaty and its protocols, must do so without further delay. Equally important, those who have not yet done so should sign and ratify the CTBT. Ratification of both these treaties will strengthen the bond between Pelindaba treaty and the CTBT and underline their combined role as a powerful force for international peace and security. It will demonstrate the African nations' commitment to their non-proliferation and disarmament obligations under the NPT. It will facilitate the aspirations of many African nations to explore the use of nuclear science and technologies for peaceful purpose.

The entry into force of the Pelindaba treaty, and the positive outcome at the 2010 NPT Review Conference, provided renewed impetus for nuclear disarmament. Nonetheless, although the political will of the international community is evident, it is high time to translate political determination into concrete action. Progress on universalizing the CTBT and the Pelindaba treaty in Africa, or the lack thereof, will define how our security will look for decades to come.
