



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 JEREMIAH N. MAMABOLO
PERMANENT REPRESENTATIVE
OF THE REPUBLIC OF SOUTH AFRICA
TO THE UNITED NATIONS**

**DURING THE THEMATIC DEBATE ON NUCLEAR
WEAPONS**

**UNITED NATIONS
NEW YORK
21 October 2013**

Check against delivery

Chairperson,

My delegation fully associates itself with the statements delivered on behalf of the Non-Aligned Movement and the New Agenda Coalition.

The three pillars of the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT)-- disarmament, non-proliferation and the right to use nuclear energy for peaceful purposes -- are central to the balance and effectiveness of the nuclear regime. South Africa believes that these three pillars require equal attention and that progress in one area must not come at the expense of progress in another.

With this in mind, the international community agreed to the Final Document of the 2010 NPT Review Conference (RevCon). The RevCon acknowledged the importance of the non-proliferation pillar of the Treaty, but also reiterated the disarmament obligations of the nuclear-weapon States under Article VI. In this context, the agreements reached at the 1995 and 2000 NPT RevCons were reaffirmed by the 2010 Final Document.

Chairperson,

As long as nuclear weapons exist, humankind will face the threat of catastrophe. Experience demonstrates that the immense, uncontrollable capability and indiscriminate nature of a nuclear weapons detonation reaches well-beyond national borders, leaving a trail of death and destruction in its wake. This impact -- including the longer-term humanitarian, environmental and socio-economic consequences -- will be with us for generations. The international community has overwhelmingly voiced their concern at this grave threat. This was also the subject of the March 2013 Conference on the Humanitarian Impact of Nuclear Weapons held in Oslo. All participants maintained that no State or international body could adequately address the humanitarian emergency that would result from a nuclear weapon detonation. South Africa looks forward to Mexico's follow-up Conference in February 2014, which will enable us to continue this important dialogue.

Since the 2012 NPT PrepCom, my delegation is pleased to have joined a growing number of States to express our deep concern about the unacceptable humanitarian consequences of nuclear weapons.

While the catastrophic humanitarian consequences of nuclear weapons are not new and have been on the international agenda since these weapons were first developed, this message has not been at the core of nuclear disarmament deliberations for many years. The shift in the discourse from a national security focus to a humanitarian one is welcome. Humanitarian considerations are now recognised as a fundamental global concern and lie at the core of deliberations on nuclear weapons.

The vast public resources diverted towards nuclear weapons stand in stark contrast to the delivery of development assistance in support of the Millennium Development Goals

(MDGs). Today, the costs associated with the maintenance of nuclear arsenals amount to roughly more than double the development assistance provided to Africa. This state of affairs is clearly neither acceptable nor sustainable in a world where the basic human needs of billions cannot be met.

As long as nuclear weapons exist, vertical and horizontal proliferation will persist. The continued development of new categories of nuclear weapons and their delivery systems provides a clear indication that some countries continue to harbour aspirations for the indefinite retention of these weapons, contrary to their legal obligations and commitments.

All efforts must therefore be exerted to eliminate these threats. The only way to guarantee that nuclear weapons will never be used again is through their total elimination and the assurance that they will never be produced again. All States have a legitimate stake in and responsibility for nuclear disarmament. As such, South Africa believes that all of us -- developed and developing, nuclear-weapon or non-nuclear weapons States -- have a contribution to make towards the construction of a framework for the achievement and maintenance of a world without nuclear weapons, which includes clearly defined benchmarks and timelines backed by strong system of verification.

Chairperson,

South Africa welcomes to transparency measures taken by some of the nuclear-weapon States in providing information about their nuclear weapons arsenals. Beyond the reporting obligations agreed to in 2010, we would encourage all five nuclear-weapon States to further increase their efforts to enhance transparency and to build confidence among States Parties.

Beyond the implementation of the new START agreement between the Russian Federation and United States, it is necessary to recall the commitments made towards deeper reductions. We regret that the commitments towards the entry-into-force of the Comprehensive Nuclear Test-Ban Treaty (CTBT) have not yet been realised. We call on all States that have yet to ratify the Treaty, particularly the Annex II States, to do so without further delay.

Chairperson,

Pending the achievement of a world without nuclear weapons, South Africa believes that those States that have foresworn the nuclear-weapons option have the right to demand unconditional, legally-binding security assurances. We regret that no progress has been made towards this end. We are equally concerned about the lack of progress towards the conclusion of a treaty banning the production of fissile material for nuclear weapons and other nuclear explosive devices that would serve both nuclear non-proliferation and nuclear disarmament objectives. Various technical and security complications are being used as arguments against such an instrument with some opposing the inclusion of any stocks and

others insisting on including all stocks. It is clear to my delegation that these differences would need to be overcome if we are to make any progress towards such a Treaty, as one of the important steps towards achieving a world without nuclear weapons. But this will depend on whether there is indeed a commitment to nuclear disarmament and the political will to secure progress towards this end.

Chairperson,

The second Preparatory Committee for the 2015 NPT Review Conference illustrated the dissatisfaction of most States Parties about the lack of progress towards the implementation of the 2010 Action Plan, including the failure to convene a Conference in 2012 on the establishment of a Middle East zone free of nuclear weapons and other weapons of mass destruction. It is clear that the success of the 2015 Review Conference is depended on the extent to which States Parties implement their solemn commitments, including those by the nuclear-weapon States to accelerate concrete progress on the steps leading to nuclear disarmament.

In conclusion, Chairperson, let me reiterate that nuclear weapons have no place in today's security environment. The humanitarian imperatives that underpin the need for their complete elimination demand a renewed commitment and determination by all to the achievement and maintenance of a world without nuclear weapons. South Africa stands ready to contribute towards this end.

I thank you, Chairperson.