



African Commission on Nuclear Energy

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PRESS STATEMENT

The African Commission on Nuclear Energy (AFCONE) is proud to announce the 11th anniversary of the entry into force of the African Weapons -Free -Zone Treaty, commonly referred to as the Treaty of Pelindaba on 15 July 2020.

The anniversary was observed by states parties and other partners: the Republic of Capo Verde deposited the ratification instruments of the Treaty of Pelindaba on 7 February 2020 and the Republic of Botswana ratified the Treaty on the Prohibition on Nuclear Weapons (TPNW) on 15 July 2020 to coincide with the anniversary. Furthermore, despite negative impact of the Covid-19 on the global disarmament machinery, Namibia and Lesotho also ratified the TPNW this year and South Africa ratified it in 2019.

Nuclear Weapons Free Zones are an instrumental approach to strengthening global nuclear disarmament and non-proliferation norms and consolidate international efforts towards achieving the objectives of the NPT and, urges States that have not yet done so, to ratify or accede to the African Nuclear Weapon-Free-Zone Treaty (Treaty of Pelindaba), and strongly urges the concerned States to affirm their respect to the nuclear-weapon-free status of the zone by ratifying or acceding to the Protocols of the Treaty as soon as possible.

AFCONE also reaffirm the need to implement the Action Plan of the 2010 NPT Review Conference regarding the establishment of a Middle East zone free from nuclear weapons and other weapons of mass destruction and wish to reiterate then the continued validity of the 1995 resolution on the Middle East until its full implementation.

AFCONE sees the TPNW as reinforcing to global disarmament and non-proliferation and calls upon African States to support the entry into force of the TPNW, by ratifying the Treaty. In March 2018, States Parties to the Pelindaba Treaty called on African Union Member States to “speedily sign and ratify the treaty”, emphasizing that this “advances international law in nuclear disarmament and is consistent with the goals of the Treaty of Pelindaba.”

This August will mark 75 years since of the atomic bombings of Hiroshima and Nagasaki, which claimed close to a quarter of a million lives. Bringing into force the 2017 Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons (TPNW) would be a most fitting tribute to the victims and survivors of the atomic bombings.

These anniversaries are a reminder of the importance of the Treaty as a regional security and confidence building measure, and contributor towards a world free of nuclear weapons. The Treaty of Pelindaba is extension of the nuclear non-proliferation regime through the inclusion of strengthening provisions that are supplementary to those already undertaken by States Parties under the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty (NPT)- such as prohibiting the stationing and testing of nuclear explosives, or dumping radioactive materials in the territories of its Parties.

The Treaty of Pelindaba is central in ensuring control of and fostering Cooperation in the Peaceful Uses of Nuclear Science and Energy.

AFCONE remains committed to ensuring that all African States are State Parties to the Pelindaba Treaty.



15 July 2020