STATEMENT BY
THE REPUBLIC OF SOUTH AFRICA

ON

IMPLEMENTATION OF THE PROVISIONS OF
THE TREATY RELATING TO
NON-PROLIFERATION OF NUCLEAR WEAPONS,
SAFEGUARDS AND NUCLEAR-WEAPON-FREE ZONES:

ARTICLE IV AND PREAMBULAR PARAGRAPHS 6 AND 7;
ARTICLES I AND II AND PREAMBULAR PARAGRAPHS 1 TO 3
IN THEIR RELATIONSHIPS TO ARTICLES III AND IV;
ARTICLE VII

Geneva, 5 May 2003

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Mr. Chairperson,

Thank you for giving me the floor.

My delegation has always viewed the question of nuclear-weapon-free zones, as envisaged in Article VII of the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty (NPT), as well as the issue of safeguards – particularly as it relates to Article III and preambular paragraphs 4 and 5 of the Treaty – as important aspects of the nuclear disarmament and nuclear non-proliferation process.

On the issue of nuclear-weapon-free zones, the 2000 Review Conference of the Parties to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons in its Final Document reaffirmed the conviction that the establishment of nuclear-weapon-free zones “enhances global and regional peace and security, strengthens the nuclear non-proliferation regime and contributes towards realizing the objectives of nuclear disarmament”. In this regard, Mr. Chairperson, countries in Africa may rightfully be proud of the African Nuclear-Weapon-Free Zone Treaty, commonly known as the Treaty of Pelindaba. It is an African success story. The Treaty represents some of the best news coming out of an Africa that continues to suffer its share of the tragic and destructive effects of conflict and was signed by more than forty five African States on 11 April 1996 in Cairo. I would, however, call on those States that have not yet done so, to sign and/or ratify the Treaty as soon as possible in order to ensure its entry into force.

Given South Africa’s belief that nuclear-weapon-free zones play an important role within the context of the nuclear disarmament and nuclear non-proliferation, my delegation welcomes the endeavours of the five Central Asian States to establish a nuclear-weapon-free zone in that region. We trust that these efforts will add further impetus to the establishment of nuclear-weapon-free zones in other parts of the world. We would also like to again commend Cuba for its decision to become a party to Treaty of Tlatelolco, which makes the regime of the nuclear-weapon-free zone in Latin America and the Caribbean complete. This crucial step for the Tlatelolco zone, is also an important step in reinforcing the de facto situation of the Southern Hemisphere as a zone free of nuclear weapons. As delegations are aware, the combination of the Antarctic Treaty, the Treaty of Tlatelolco, The Treaty of Rarotonga, the Treaty of Pelindaba and the Treaty of Bangkok effectively covers the whole of the Southern Hemisphere.

Mr. Chairperson,

This additional layer of undertakings by the non-nuclear-weapon States Parties to the NPT, in committing themselves not to aspire to nuclear weapons, also reinforces our belief of the necessity to reach an agreement under the NPT umbrella for the provision of security assurances. Any careful student of the nuclear-weapon-free zone issue and of the security assurances issue should immediately come to the understanding that the NPT States Parties falling within the zones of applications of the nuclear-weapon-free zone treaties do either still not have, or have differing, guarantees against the use or threat of use of nuclear weapons. The fact remains that the NPT is the central instrument of the nuclear non-proliferation treaty regime, of which the nuclear-weapon-free zone
treaties only form a part -- together with the other instruments, elements, agreements, undertakings and commitments that we have established, or agreed to, in our endeavour to comply with the nuclear non-proliferation and nuclear disarmament obligations of the NPT. As a consequence, all of the States parties to the NPT have the right to expect the same security assurances -- applicable to all -- and the only logical place to achieve this is within the context of the NPT itself.

Mr. Chairperson,

As was noted in South Africa's statement under the nuclear disarmament cluster, it is our view that the principle of irreversibility which was agreed to as Step 5 of the 13 practical steps for the systematic and progressive efforts to implement the agreed to unequivocal commitment to our nuclear disarmament obligation, should also apply to non-proliferation. As we stated, it has long been our view that disarmament and non-proliferation are inextricably linked, and that real and irreversible movement on nuclear disarmament would reinforce the irreversibility of nuclear non-proliferation.

Mr. Chairperson,

International efforts to curb the spread of nuclear weapons have resulted in a system where the Non-Proliferation Treaty is a cornerstone of nuclear disarmament and non-proliferation, with the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) acting as custodian of its safeguards system. Of significance also, is the expressed recognition at the 2000 NPT Review Conference of the IAEA as the competent authority for verifying compliance with safeguards agreements.

Unfortunately, however, there are still about fifty Safeguards Agreements to be concluded or brought into force by NPT States Parties as required by Article III of the Treaty. We would therefore appeal to those States that have not yet done so, to comply with their Treaty obligations and sign and ratify full-scope Safeguards Agreements.

Mr. Chairperson,

Turning to the question of the IAEA's Additional Protocol, it would be fair to say that it took a while for South Africa to formally accept the Additional Protocol. However, it should be remembered that during the so-called "Completeness Investigation" into the destruction of South Africa's nuclear weapons in the early 1990's, South Africa served as a test bed and proving ground for many of the ideas and approaches today employed in the Additional Protocol. South Africa was not only the first country ever to destroy its nuclear explosive devices and close down its dedicated facilities, but also gave the IAEA free access to information, materials, facilities and staff on the basis of "any time, any place". This is more than the Additional Protocol today requires in a legal sense. In addition, South Africa has participated in the scheme approved by the Board in 1993 for the voluntary reporting of the export and import of specified equipment and non-nuclear material, similar to that in Annex II of the Additional Protocol.

Against the above background, we are pleased to report that South Africa signed an Additional Protocol with the IAEA on 13 September 2002. In the latter regard, South Africa was also pleased to have hosted a seminar on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons: The Role of Safeguards Agreements and Additional Protocols in Benoni,
Johannesburg, from 24 to 27 June 2002. The seminar was aimed at capacity building amongst African States regarding IAEA Safeguards Agreements and Additional Protocols to the Safeguards Agreements.

Mr. Chairperson,

The Additional Protocol will place an extra burden on South Africa in terms of comprehensive information to be submitted and kept up to date in terms of Articles 2 and 3 of the Additional Protocol. The Agency Inspectors will also have greater ("complementary") access to sites, facilities and activities as foreseen in Articles 4 to 8. However, whilst it is certain that implementation of the Additional Protocol will place an extra burden on South Africa, we nevertheless feel that it is a price worth paying in order to strengthen our goals of nuclear disarmament and nuclear non-proliferation.

In conclusion, Mr. Chairperson, my delegation strongly supports international efforts aimed at further strengthening the safeguards system. We therefore appeal to all States Parties to honour their obligations, as envisaged in Article III of the NPT.

Mr. Chairperson, I thank you.