STATEMENT BY
THE REPUBLIC OF SOUTH AFRICA

ON

IMPLEMENTATION OF THE PROVISIONS OF
THE TREATY RELATING TO THE INALIENABLE RIGHT OF
ALL PARTIES TO THE TREATY TO
DEVELOP RESEARCH, PRODUCTION AND USE OF
NUCLEAR ENERGY FOR PEACEFUL PURPOSES,
WITHOUT DISCRIMINATION AND IN CONFORMITY WITH
ARTICLES I AND II:

ARTICLE (3) AND IV, PREAMBULAR PARAGRAPHS 6 AND 7,
ESPECIALLY IN THEIR RELATIONSHIP TO
ARTICLE III (1), (2), (4) AND
PREAMBULAR PARAGRAPHS 4 AND 5,
AND ARTICLE V

Geneva, 7 May 2003
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Mr. Chairperson,

Thank you for giving me the floor.

South Africa continues to endeavour to promote international cooperation in the field of peaceful nuclear activities, as envisaged in Article III (3) of the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT) and also encourages the exchange of scientific information -- particularly in Africa -- for the further development of the applications of atomic energy for peaceful purposes in accordance with preambular paragraph 7.

Furthermore, South Africa attaches great importance to technical co-operation, and welcomes recent projects that have been undertaken by the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) to promote socio-economic and developmental aspects in developing countries, particularly in the African region. In fact, Mr. Chairperson, technical co-operation and the exchange of scientific information related to the peaceful uses of nuclear energy are facets that are also extremely important within the context of the New Economic Partnership for Africa’s Development, or NEPAD, as it is commonly known.

In the context of the development of nuclear energy for peaceful purposes, my delegation has already stressed at other international fora that it is important that innovative ways be found to accommodate the interests of developing countries. We therefore reiterate that efforts should be concentrated on the application of nuclear techniques in combating the occurrence of infectious diseases such as TB, malaria, and HIV/AIDS, which sadly continue to hamper economic prosperity and development in many parts of the world.

Mr. Chairperson,

South Africa is pleased to have been able to work within the context of the African Regional Co-operative Agreement for Research, Development and Training related to Nuclear Science and Technology (AFRA) in order to share expertise and experience to promote and develop the beneficial uses of radiation and nuclear technology for socio-economic development in Africa. AFRA’s approach is that African problems relating to nuclear technology should, as far as possible, be solved by the utilisation of expertise residing on the African continent. Its activities are grouped into five themes, namely radiation safety, human health, agricultural development, industrial applications, and self-reliance and sustainability, whilst technology and skills transfer mostly take place through expert missions and training events, such as workshops, seminars, etc.

Over the past number of years, South African specialists have undertaken numerous missions to African countries on aspects such as the safe storage of radioactive sources, dam leakage protection, auditing of radiotherapy and nuclear medicine facilities and good management practices, to name but a few. Furthermore, Tygerberg Hospital in South Africa’s Western Cape Province, as well as the Nuclear Energy Corporation of South Africa (NECSA), have been nominated as AFRA regional designated centres for radiotherapy and medical physics, and waste management respectively.

Mr. Chairperson,
During the course of last year, South African experts participated in 31 expert missions to other countries, most of them in Africa, and our experts also formed part of an IAEA team that developed a set of indicators for sustainability of national nuclear institutions in Africa, which was a first for the IAEA. Individuals who visited South Africa for fellowship training and scientific visits also numbered more than one hundred and South African experts visited a number of African countries for training courses and demonstrations on the use of radioisotopes for industrial plant inspections.

Mr. Chairperson,

Regarding specific projects related to the peaceful uses of nuclear energy in my country, we should mention the Pebble Bed Modular Reactor (PBMR) presently being evaluated as a power source in South Africa, as well as a viable South African export product. The PBMR is a small scale, inherently safe nuclear reactor of which the concept is based on experience in the US and particularly Germany, where reactors of this type were operated successfully between the late 1960s and 1980s. Although not the only high-temperature, gas-cooled nuclear reactor presently being developed in the world, the South African project is regarded internationally as the leader in the power generation field. At present work is continuing in my country on the licensing activities for the PBMR.

Mr. Chairperson,

The above is meant to demonstrate South Africa’s determination to continue making meaningful contributions to international co-operation on the peaceful uses of nuclear energy, particularly within an African context. The peaceful application of nuclear technology forms an integral part of the NPT, and as such should serve as a reminder of the benefits -- and not the destruction -- that nuclear energy can hold. South Africa will therefore continue to encourage the international community to maximise the benefits of nuclear technology applications for peaceful purposes, as envisaged by the Treaty.

Based on this determination, South Africa also makes every effort, as a matter of law determined by our legislature and our executive, to ensure that no transfer -- whether of materials, technologies or equipment -- takes place from South Africa that would not be used for peaceful purposes. To implement our national obligations in this regard, we have two sets of legislation, the Nuclear Energy Act and the Act on the Non-Proliferation of Weapons of Mass Destruction.

Mr. Chairperson, I thank you.