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Statement by the Foreign Minister of The Republic of South Africa, Mr. Alfred Nzo, 'The 1995 Review and Extension Conference of the Parties to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT)'

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Summary:

Foreign Minister Alfred Nzo thanked the President of NPT, offers a legal analysis of X(2) Article and the commitment to dispose of nuclear weapons, referring to articles of treaty.

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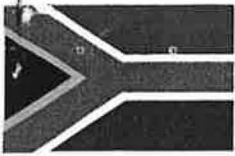
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TO THE UNITED NATIONS

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**STATEMENT BY
THE FOREIGN MINISTER OF
THE REPUBLIC OF SOUTH AFRICA,
MR ALFRED NZO**

**THE 1995 REVIEW AND EXTENSION CONFERENCE
OF THE PARTIES TO THE
TREATY ON THE NON-PROLIFERATION OF NUCLEAR WEAPONS (NPT)**

19 APRIL 1995

Mr President,

I wish to join previous speakers by also extending our congratulations to you on your election as President of the 1995 Review and Extension Conference of the Parties to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons. We also wish to congratulate the other officers of the Conference and the Main Committees on their election to these posts. You and the members of your Bureau and the Secretariat can count on my delegation's support and cooperation in the fulfilment of your duties. The issues which face this Conference are of fundamental importance and on your shoulders rest the responsibility of guiding us to a successful conclusion.

Mr President, at the outset, I would like also thank you for the kind remarks which you directed to my country in your Presidential Statement. The recognition which you gave to us as the first country to have unilaterally and voluntarily dismantled and destroyed an existing nuclear weapons programme is sincerely appreciated.

I further wish to commend the Secretary General of the United Nations and the Director General of the International Atomic Energy Agency for their statements. I listened to these with interest and believe that they have raised many substantive issues for us to reflect upon.

Mr President,

South Africa has played an active part in all of the Preparatory Committee meetings for this Conference. We have, in response to General Assembly Resolution 49/75F, provided a legal analysis of the extension options contained in Article X(2) of the Treaty. South Africa's keen interest arises out of the Government of National Unity's commitment to a policy on non-proliferation and arms control which covers all weapons of mass destruction and which extends to our concerns about the proliferation of conventional weapons. In terms of this policy, Democratic South Africa is a responsible possessor of advanced technologies. We see our non-proliferation and arms control policy as being integral to our commitment to democracy, human rights, sustainable development, social justice and environmental protection. It was in this context that South Africa turned away from the edge of the nuclear weapons abyss.

When the NPT was adopted 25 years ago it represented a major advance towards nuclear disarmament, committing its members to making the world a safer place. The dramatic changes brought about by the end of the Cold War has created the global environment in which it has been possible for the number of nuclear weapons to be reduced, and the international community now has a unique opportunity to realise the NPT's basic objectives.

It is our fundamental belief that the Treaty on the Non-

Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons should not be placed in jeopardy, and that the review and extension process should strengthen, not weaken the non-proliferation regime. We firmly hold the view that the security of individual countries, like ourselves, and of the international community as a whole would be severely damaged if the NPT were weakened.

Mr President,

South Africa took the decision to destroy its nuclear weapons and to become a States Party to the NPT because we saw our security being guaranteed by its provisions. It is for this reason also that South Africa has become an active sponsor of an African Nuclear Weapon Free Zone Treaty which will be indefinite. While there is some valid criticism levelled at the implementation of some provisions of the NPT, there is also recognition of the success of some of its basic provisions. Since the entry into force of the NPT, the number of threshold states has diminished. Several countries, including ourselves, have drawn back from the nuclear weapon option and have become a part of the nuclear non-proliferation regime.

The NPT also remains the only international instrument on nuclear disarmament to which all five nuclear weapon states are bound. The continued existence of the Treaty will ensure that this commitment by nuclear weapon states to disarmament remains. We believe that the inequalities inherent in the Treaty as well as the criticism of provisions regarding disarmament, peaceful uses, and other aspects of the Treaty should not be dealt with in such a fashion that they threaten the security that the NPT provides. South Africa, therefore in principle supports the view that the NPT should be extended indefinitely. The termination of the Treaty - whether this comes about by placing conditions on its future existence or by extending it only for a fixed period - is not an acceptable option. As has been pointed out the linkage of the Treaty to certain conditions raises the question, inter alia, of what would happen if, for one or other reason, the conditions were not met. There is, however, concern that proper checks and balances should be put in place to ensure that the objectives of the Treaty are translated into reality.

Since the review and extension process should not damage the Treaty, the decision on extension should be taken only after every effort has been made to achieve the broadest possible support. Any decision which is taken by a simple majority would weaken the Treaty. It would undermine the commitment to the NPT of those who are left on the outside. Whilst a consensus decision would be ideal, we nevertheless believe that the decision needs to be taken by a significant majority. This majority would in all likelihood need to include key countries from across group boundaries.

Many countries have, with good reason, been critical about the failures and delays to:

- Fully implement the disarmament provisions of the Treaty by totally eliminating the arsenals of the nuclear weapon states,
- Provide the non-nuclear weapon states with effective security assurances,
- Ensure the unencumbered transfer of peaceful nuclear technology.

South Africa therefore firmly believes that a mechanism must be found to address these concerns about the implementation of the Treaty.

So as not to draw these issues into the debate about the continued existence of the Treaty, it is desirable that the review process provided for by Article VIII(3) should be strengthened. This could be done by the adoption of a set of "Principles for Nuclear Non-Proliferation and Disarmament" which would be taken into account when the implementation of the Treaty is reviewed. These Principles would, as was the case in the Preamble of the Treaty, set out the general obligations and goals which States Parties would strive for. They would take into account the current international environment, which is very different from that which existed when the Treaty was negotiated. These Principles would not be an amendment of the Treaty; they would rather be a lodestar which would focus attention on the importance of these goals. Commitment to these Principles would be renewed at every Review to ensure that they are dynamic and that they adapt to changing international circumstances. They would not be conditions which could lead to the termination of the Treaty, but would rather be the yardstick by which all the States Parties can measure their non-proliferation and disarmament achievements.

We believe that the following broad issues should be taken into account when formulating the set of "Principles for Nuclear Non-Proliferation and Disarmament":

- Restatement of the commitment to non-proliferation of nuclear weapons;
- Strengthening and full adherence to IAEA safeguard agreements;
- Access to nuclear material and technology for peaceful purposes,
- Progress made in the Cut-Off Convention negotiations;
- Progress made in the reduction of nuclear arsenals;
- Progress made in the negotiations for the establishment of a Comprehensive Test Ban treaty;
- Commitment to the establishment of regional nuclear weapon free zones;
- Enforcing binding security assurances for non-nuclear weapon states.

Mr President,

It is accepted that there will be many proposals at this Conference which will attempt to identify how we can strengthen the Review process. A mechanism which could possibly provide us with the

vehicle for the consideration and implementation of these suggestions is the establishment of a Committee (which can either be open-ended or consist of a representative group of countries) and which will be tasked with (i) studying the Review Process, and (ii) making concrete recommendations on how to improve and strengthen the Review Conference mechanism. The report on the Committee's recommendation should then be submitted for the consideration of all States Parties - possibly at an additional Preparatory Committee session in the run-up to the year 2000 Review Conference. That PrepCom should then in turn be tasked with the responsibility of including these improvements into the agenda and programme of work of the next Review Conference.

In general terms I would also like to take this idea further by making make some initial suggestions of ideas which can be considered by such a Committee:

- We would suggest that the basic structure of the Review Conferences should be retained. Provision should, however, be made for the debate and substantive consideration of specific issues by establishing sub-committees of the three Main Committees. These sub-committees should not be tasked with the consideration of specific Treaty Articles, but should rather study a specific issue or issues which fall within the ambit of those Treaty provisions which are being considered by the parent Main Committee. Examples of the issues which we have in mind for consideration by such sub-committees are methods to achieve universality; the viability of a proposal to freeze the production of nuclear weapons; and the identification of the issues which will need to be addressed once the current Disarmament Agenda of CTBT, Cut-Off and Security Assurances have been met. The mechanism of the substantive debates at the PrepComs can be used to identify the issues which could be referred to such sub-committees.
- The adoption of the set of "Principles for Nuclear Non-Proliferation and Disarmament" which I referred to earlier.
- The establishment of an open-ended Committee which would meet at fixed intervals during the period between Review Conferences, and which would consider specific ways on how to strengthen the Treaty and non-proliferation regime in all its aspects. The reports of such an open-ended Committee can form the basis for debates in a specified number of sessions of the Plenary Meetings at future Review Conferences.

Mr President,

I would now like to raise a few specific points concerning some important issues as well as some of the key articles in the Treaty which I have not yet addressed.

Like many other countries, South Africa believes that the disarmament provisions contained in Article VI are essential for

the effective implementation of the Treaty. Whilst we welcome the steps taken by the United States and Russia in the Start I and II agreements as evidence of their commitment to disarmament, we believe that further steps should be taken to accelerate the pace of nuclear disarmament and for the earliest possible conclusion of a Start III type agreement. The time may also be right for considering whether the arsenals of the other Nuclear Weapon States should not be included in this process.

South Africa, together with many countries, welcomes the steps which were taken in the Security Council to provide the Non-Nuclear-Weapon States with Security Assurances. We believe that Security Assurances are a key element of the bargain which was struck in the NPT. We welcome the very positive steps which are contained in Security Council Resolution 984 (1995) as well as in the statements which were made by the five Nuclear-Weapon States. We, however, remain convinced that the most effective way to address this issue and which would provide credible and effective security assurances would be through the negotiation, by all the States Parties to the Treaty, of an international agreement prohibiting the use or threat of use of nuclear weapons against Non-Nuclear Weapon States Parties to the NPT.

During the 49th Session of the United Nations General Assembly South Africa gave its support to the Resolutions calling for the establishment of nuclear-weapon-free zones. We believe that these zones afford an added dimension to the security provided by the NPT. As I have already mentioned South Africa has become an active sponsor of an African Nuclear Weapon Free Zone Treaty, and we will be the host at the end of May for the next meeting of the Group of Experts who are preparing the text. This is the last meeting which is currently envisaged for the Experts and it is my hope that they will be successful in finalising the draft text.

With regard to Article III, South Africa supports the principle of strengthened safeguards as well the work which is being done by the IAEA in this regard. We have been participating in field trials relating to environmental monitoring and we in principle support the idea of including environmental monitoring as an integral part of the safeguards system. In line with many of the G-77 countries represented in Vienna, South Africa has, however, indicated that it needs time to obtain an opinion on the legal implications of such a strengthened safeguards system as well as more information on the cost implications. South Africa, however, also urges greater transparency on the part of the Nuclear Weapons States. This will go a long way toward allaying concerns and suspicions regarding the manner in which the Weapon States are meeting their responsibilities under the Treaty.

With regard to Article IV, South Africa is participating in the IAEA's Technical Cooperation Programme and we are strongly in favour of the exchange of technology for the peaceful uses of nuclear energy between the developed and the developing world. In this context South Africa recognises the importance of the concept

of sustainable development as a guiding principle for all peaceful uses of nuclear energy. South Africa is currently a host country for the training of scientists and technicians from Africa. At the IAEA's March 1995 Board of Governor's meeting, South Africa supported the establishment of a Standing Advisory Group on Technical Assistance and Cooperation. We also believe that SAGTAC could usefully convene a meeting of all interested parties, particularly the developing countries, for a discussion of specific problem areas in the field of nuclear technology transfer. South Africa, with its extensive nuclear infrastructure and competencies, has furthermore pledged itself to participate actively in the "African Regional Cooperative Agreement for Research, Development and Training related to Nuclear Science and Technology", and is contributing extensively to many of the registered projects covering waste disposal, food preservation, irradiation processing, nuclear instrumentation, environmental radiation detection and harmonisation, research reactor utilisation, safety and operation and improvements in clinical radiotherapy. South Africa would like to see and would strongly support greater levels of involvement on the part of the developed world in the transfer of peaceful nuclear technologies to the developing world, and especially to Africa.

Mr President,

Apartheid South Africa as a part of its national security policy embarked on a nuclear weapons programme. Democratic South Africa sees the international and regional security being achieved by complete nuclear disarmament. The NPT provides us in Africa and the international community with greater security than did the nuclear weapons which we have destroyed. Southern Africa until very recently was in a state of conflict, war and destabilisation and nuclear weapons were thought to be providing security. I believe that the South African experience - namely, that security is provided by nuclear disarmament rather than by nuclear proliferation - is a telling one: not only for the "threshold" States, but also for the "acknowledged" Weapon States.

This Conference provides us with a unique opportunity to fulfil the expectations of the international community. We believe that with the necessary political will we can create a world free of nuclear weapons. We must not fail.

Mr President, I thank you.