
STATEMENT

by David Cleave, Executive Director of the International Science and Technology Center, at the 5th Conference of State Parties of the African Nuclear Weapon Free Zone Treaty, organized by the African Commission on Nuclear Energy (Johannesburg, 21 October 2021)

Esteemed Executive Secretary Messaoud Baaliouamer,
Excellences,
Distinguished Delegates,

I am delighted to congratulate you on behalf of the International Science and Technology Center on the convening of the 5th Conference of State Parties (CSP) the African Nuclear Weapon Free Zone Treaty.

ISTC is proud to have the partnership of the African Commission on Nuclear Energy (AFCONE) in our activities in Africa, based on the bilateral Memorandum of Cooperation. I appreciate the invitation to address the 5th CSP, organized for the first time in South Africa, close to the highly symbolic site of Pelindaba, shortly before the 10th NPT Review Conference, the preparation for which ought to take into account the African views and approaches to the international disarmament and nonproliferation, as well as to the safe and secure peaceful uses of the nuclear energy.

Our mission, at ISTC, is to advance global peace and prosperity through cooperative CBRN risk mitigation by supporting civilian science and technology partnerships that address global security threats and advance non-proliferation. One of the remarkable new developments in ISTC is the advent of new State Parties to the organization, coming from Africa. Kenya will join our membership comprising: Armenia, the European Union, Georgia, Japan, Kazakhstan, the Republic of Korea, the Kyrgyz Republic, Norway, Tajikistan, and the United States. With or without membership, mechanisms for participation have permitted citizens from over 30 African countries to participate in ISTC activities.

Previously, both the 2000 and 2010 NPT Review Conferences highlighted the potential of nuclear-weapon-free zones (NWFZs) and reflected in their Final Documents the need to enhance consultation mechanisms among the existing zones. There is little doubt that the upcoming NPT 2020 Review Conference will reach the similar conclusion, provided that the necessary preparatory coordination takes place.

Back in 2019, invited by Kazakhstan, ISTC's host country, AFCONE and ISTC participated in the Seminar on the margins of the International Day Against Nuclear Tests (29 August), designed to strengthen the ties between the zones and with the International Organizations. Important recommendations were approved, among them: further

institutionalizing the meetings of “points of contacts” for the zones; tabling joint resolutions at the UN General Assembly; regular exchange of information on zonal activities; promotion of disarmament education, research and analysis on important elements of nuclear-weapon-free zones.

In this vein we share a lot of AFCONE’s objectives and successfully work together to achieve them.

In August 2020, ISTC, AFCONE and the Kenyan National Commission for Science, Technology and Innovation, organized a webinar entitled: *Benefits from Interregional Dialogue on Nuclear Governance: Africa and Central Asia*, providing nuclear experts from Eastern and Southern African countries with glimpses from the remarkable achievements in nuclear governance of Kazakhstan.

In September 2020, ISTC and AFCONE organized an online discussion among experts on the topic *African Uranium Resources: Exploration, Exploitation and Cooperation Opportunities* in line with one of the main functions of AFCONE to facilitate the regional and sub-regional programs for co-operation in the peaceful uses of nuclear science and technology, and to promote international co-operation with extra-zonal states. The results were included in the Plan of Action designed to enhance Africa – Central Asia cooperation in uranium exploration, exploitation, capacity building, research and innovation, and to up-scale initiatives for the benefit the entire African continent.

In December 2020 on the initiative of AFCONE several international organizations convened an online seminar on the topic: *Fostering and Sustaining Non-Proliferation Verification Systems through Development of National and Regional Nuclear Safeguards Capacities*. AFCONE teamed up for this event with the IAEA Department of Safeguards; the U.S. DOE/NNSA; the European Safeguards Research and Development Association (ESARDA) and ISTC. The seminar attracted the participation of approximately one hundred African experts.

At ISTC, we agree with AFCONE that there should be a paradigm shift in Africa in the direction of a sustained dynamic development program, including through efficient contribution of the Youth. Based on our experience from collaboration with the African Young Generation in Nuclear, we are convinced that the young generation which AFCONE seeks to inspire and activate, is capable to ensure effective, safe and secure peaceful nuclear applications, pursuing excellence in education and training and research and development. ISTC welcomed, in March 2021, and contributed to the AFCONE – AYGN webinar: *Capacity Building for Safe and Secure Development in Africa of Peaceful Uses of Nuclear Energy, including Nuclear Power*.

The joint action that crowned ISTC’s cooperation with AFCONE and FNRBA was the two-week *Training Course on the Implementation of the International Atomic Energy Agency Regulations for the Safe Transport of Radioactive Material*. The course enriched the knowledge and skills of 34 participants - a third of them women - from 17 African countries, SADC and FNRBA Member States.

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Pelindaba Treaty State Parties have adopted a different approaches to regulatory frameworks and policies to allow safe and secure peaceful use of nuclear energy and applications. In case sufficient political will be mobilized, AFCONE may provide a platform for further nuclear governance synchronization among the African countries, and with regions beyond the continent.

For these purposes AFCONE can continuously rely on ISTC’s support and collaboration.