



PRESS RELEASE

THE AFRICAN UNION WELCOMES THE RATIFICATION OF PROTOCOLS TO THE TREATY OF PELINDABA BY THE RUSSIAN FEDERATION

Addis Ababa, 8 July 2011: The Chairperson of the Commission of the African Union (AU) welcomes the recent deposit of the instrument of ratification of Protocols I and II to the African Nuclear-Weapon-Free Zone Treaty, also known as the Treaty of Pelindaba, by the Russian Federation. The Russian Federation signed the Protocols on 5 November 1996.

Furthermore, the Chairperson welcomes the steps taken by the President of the United States of America, in seeking the advice and consent of the United States Senate to ratify Protocols I and II to the Treaty of Pelindaba, signed by the United States on 11 April 1996.

Through the ratification of these Protocols and other related steps, the nuclear-weapon states are demonstrating their commitment to the realization of the African Nuclear-Weapon-Free Zone, in particular, and to the Non-Proliferation Treaty and global non-proliferation, arms control and nuclear disarmament objectives, in general.

The Chairperson calls upon the other concerned states to sign/ratify the third Protocol to the Treaty without further delay.

The Chairperson also seizes the opportunity to urge Member States that have not yet done so to ratify the Treaty of Pelindaba as soon as possible.

Note to the Editors

About the Treaty of Pelindaba

The African Nuclear-Weapon-Free Zone Treaty, also known as the treaty of Pelindaba, was adopted by the 31st Ordinary Session of the OAU held in Addis Ababa in June 1995, and signed at Cairo, on 11 April 1996. The Treaty, which entered into force on 15 July 2009, prohibits the development, manufacture, stockpiling, acquisition, testing, possession, control or stationing of nuclear explosive devices in the territory of states parties and the dumping of radioactive waste in the African zone. It also prohibits any attack against nuclear installations in the zone by the parties and requires them to maintain the highest standards of physical protection of nuclear material, facilities and equipment, which are to be used exclusively for peaceful purposes for the sustainable development of the African continent.

The Treaty has three Protocols. The first two commit States Parties not to use or threaten to use a nuclear device against any territory within the African Nuclear-Weapon-Free Zone, as well as not to undertake, assist or encourage the testing of any nuclear explosive device anywhere within the Zone. These two Protocols are open for signature by the five nuclear-weapon states of China, France, the Russian Federation, the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland and the United States of America, all of which have signed. China, France, the Russian Federation and the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland have ratified Protocols I and II. The United States of America is yet to do so.

The third Protocol, which is open for signature by France and Spain, concerns the territories for which they are de jure or de facto internationally responsible for, and which are situated within the Zone. The Protocol commits them to not to contribute to any act that constitutes a violation of the Treaty. France has ratified Protocol III to the Treaty, while Spain has neither signed nor ratified it.

About the First Conference of States Parties to the Treaty

The First Conference of States Parties to the Treaty was held in Addis Ababa on 4 November 2010, in accordance with Article 14, which calls for a Conference of all States Parties as soon as possible after the entry into force of the Treaty to, *inter alia*, elect members of the African Commission on Nuclear Energy (AFCONE) and determine its Headquarters. The Conference elected the twelve Members of AFCONE for a three-year period. These are: Algeria, Burkina Faso, Cameroon, Ethiopia, Kenya, Libya, Mali, Mauritius, Senegal, South Africa, Togo and Tunisia. The Conference also endorsed the decision to establish the Headquarters of AFCONE in the Republic of South Africa.

About the African Commission on Nuclear Energy (AFCONE)

Pursuant to Article 12 of the Treaty, the States Parties agreed to establish the African Commission on Nuclear (AFCONE) to ensure compliance with their undertakings under the Treaty, promote cooperation in the peaceful, safe and secure uses of nuclear science and technology in the continent, as well as advance global non-proliferation and disarmament efforts. The AFCONE held its First Ordinary Session on 4 May 2011, in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia, where it exchanged views and discussed various issues essential to its prompt operationalization and effective operation.

In this regard, the Seventeenth Ordinary Session of the Assembly of the Union held in Malabo, Equatorial Guinea, from 30 June to 1 July 2011, welcomed the successful conclusion of the First Ordinary Session and encouraged States Parties to the Treaty to provide the AFCONE with the necessary support to ensure the early and effective commencement of its activities, and commended the AU Commission for the steps already taken in this respect. The Assembly further called upon all concerned States that have not yet done so, to take the steps required to become parties to the Treaty and to its Protocols without further delay, convinced that these instruments constitute a significant contribution to strengthening the global non-proliferation regime, promoting cooperation in the peaceful use of nuclear science and technology, as well as general and complete disarmament, with a view to enhancing regional and international peace and security.