

REPUBLIC OF ZAMBIA



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STATEMENT BY

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67TH SESSION OF UNGA

ON THE

FIRST COMMITTEE THEMATIC DEBATE ON
NUCLEAR WEAPONS

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Mr. Chairman,

I thank you for giving me the opportunity to contribute to the debate on this very important agenda item. As this is the first time my delegation is taking the floor in this Committee, allow me to congratulate you and other members of the Bureau on your election to preside over the proceedings of the Committee. My delegation is confident that through your able leadership, the Committee will achieve the desired outcome.

Mr. Chairman,

Zambia as a State Party to both the Nuclear non-Proliferation Treaty (NPT) and the Comprehensive Nuclear Test Ban Treaty (CTBT) is committed to their respective universalisation and pledges to continue supporting regional and global efforts in the field of nuclear disarmament and non-proliferation. In this regard, Zambia welcomes the success of the first session of the Preparatory Committee for the 2015 NPT Review Conference and calls for the full implementation of the Action Plan adopted at the 2010 NPT Review Conference on nuclear disarmament, non-proliferation and peaceful use of nuclear energy. In the same vein, we commend the P5 for their meeting in Washington and hope that this initiative will contribute tangible outcomes to regional and global efforts towards nuclear disarmament and non-proliferation, and in particular the 2015 Review Conference.

Despite these positive developments, Zambia is concerned with the ongoing stalemate in the Conference on Disarmament (CD). Since the CD is not only part of the United Nations Disarmament Machinery, but is also the main forum for multilateral negotiation of the NPT, CTBT and other related issues, the need to find an amicable solution to this ongoing stalemate cannot be over-emphasised. In this connection, Zambia supports international efforts aimed at revitalizing the work of the CD and calls on the First Committee to play a leading role in this aspect.

Mr. Chairman,

Zambia is concerned with the continued absence of an internationally binding instrument that guarantees unconditional and legally binding negative security assurances to non-nuclear armed States against a nuclear attack or use of threats by a nuclear armed State. Our concern is more so in view of the current environment, which is characterized by non-compliance to either the NPT or CTBT obligations by Member States. Zambia therefore, supports international efforts aimed towards negotiation of a legally binding instrument on Negative Security Assurances pending the total elimination of nuclear weapons.

Mr. Chairman,

Zambia recognises the important contribution that the CTBT shall make to the global nuclear disarmament effort and reaffirms her support. In this regard, Zambia wishes to take this opportunity to welcome the ratification of the CTBT by Central African Republic, Indonesia, Ghana, Guatamala, Guinea, Trinidad and Tobago and urges the remaining States, especially Annex 2 States whose signatures and ratifications are necessary for the early entry into force of the Treaty, to take it upon themselves to sign and ratify the Treaty without delay in order to achieve its earliest entry into force. The early entry into force of the CTBT as the core instrument whose purpose is to prohibit all nuclear testing on earth, the modernisation of existing nuclear weapons and the prevention of the development of new ones and their delivery systems will not only be a practical and systematic way of strengthening the NPT regime but also curtailing the development and manufacture of a new generation of nuclear weapons.

Mr. Chairman,

Zambia remains strongly committed to the notion of general and complete disarmament, and reaffirms her support for a world free of nuclear weapons. In this regard, Zambia appreciates the contribution that the five regional Nuclear Weapon Free Zones (NWFZ) continue to make towards the strengthening of global nuclear non-proliferation and disarmament norms and consolidation of international efforts towards peace and security. Since nuclear weapon free zones contribute to regional peace and security, Zambia reaffirms her support for the establishment of nuclear weapons free zones wherever they do not exist and welcomes the conference on the establishment of a Middle East zone free of nuclear weapons and other weapons of mass destruction to be held in Helsinki, Finland in December 2012.

Mr. Chairman,

Zambia as a State Party to the African Nuclear Weapon Free Zone Treaty (the Pelindaba Treaty) reaffirms her commitment to the Treaty and commends Ghana, Cameroon, Guinea Bissau, Chad, and Namibia for ratifying the Treaty. In this regard, Zambia reiterates her support and welcomes the efforts of the African Union (AU) in establishing the African Commission on Nuclear Energy (AFCONE) whose responsibilities among others, shall include monitoring compliance by Member States of obligations under the Pelindaba Treaty. Zambia further commends the AFCONE for holding its second ordinary session on 27th July 2012 in Addis Ababa where key documents were finalized and adopted for its early and full operationalisation. We equally commend South Africa for finalising the hosting agreement with the AU, under which the former will provide the AFCONE with the required office space and equipment in Pretoria.

Zambia further reaffirms her support for the work of the Forum of Nuclear Regulatory Bodies in Africa (FNRBA) which seeks to enhance, strengthen and harmonise radiation protection, nuclear safety and security regulatory infrastructure and framework among members as well as provide the mechanisms for it to be an effective and efficient internationally recognised forum for the

exchange of regulatory experiences and best practices among nuclear regulatory bodies of Africa. Since the purpose of the FNRBA is complementary to that of the AFCONE, Zambia urges African countries to become State party to the Forum if they have not yet done so.

Mr. Chairman,

Zambia is alive to the destructive power of nuclear energy and its implications on global safety and security. The recent nuclear disasters such as the one at the Fukushima Daiichi Nuclear Power Plant in Japan and the potential for terrorist elements to acquire nuclear and radioactive substances and technology attest to the urgent need for an internationally agreed solution. In this regard, Zambia supports the third International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) Nuclear Safety Action Plan which covers the period 2010 to 2013 and promotes the provision of long-term sustained improvements in nuclear security as opposed to ad-hoc interventions. Zambia to this end reiterates the need for all IAEA member States to become party to the International Convention for the Suppression of Acts of Nuclear Terrorism if they have not yet done so.

Despite the Fukushima Daiichi accident, nuclear power still remains an important viable alternative for most countries. In this regard, Zambia calls upon the IAEA to continue the strengthening of regulatory mechanisms and the development of standards for the enhancement of nuclear safety and security.

Mr. Chairman,

Zambia acknowledges the measures that the IAEA continues to undertake in strengthening technical co-operation with member States in particular developing countries. In this regard, Zambia welcomes the assistance of the IAEA for installing a Radiation Portal Monitor in the northern part of the country while the second one to be installed in the southern part awaits the identification of a suitable site. Once the project is completed, the portals will go a long in assisting Zambia monitor and detect movement of any radioactive materials.

Zambia would also like to reiterate her appreciation of the offer by the IAEA to assist the country in the area of nuclear security during the United Nations World Tourism Organisation General Assembly to be held in 2013 in conjunction with Zimbabwe.

In conclusion Mr. Chairman, the continued possession of nuclear weapons by some member States, the failure of the CTBT to enter into force, and the continued stalemate in the CD are challenges that the First Committee must take seriously during the 67th Session of the United Nations General Assembly if meaningful progress is to be made in nuclear disarmament and non-proliferation.

Zambia therefore, remains committed to the ideals of nuclear disarmament and non-proliferation and hopes that the First Committee will make tangible progress during this 67th Session.

I thank you, Mr. Chairman.