

**STATEMENT BY: THE EXECUTIVE SECRETARY OF
THE AFRICAN COMMISSION ON NUCLEAR ENERGY
(AFCONE)**

MR. ENOBOT AGBORAW

TO THE:

**66TH GENERAL CONFERENCE
OF THE INTERNATIONAL ATOMIC ENERGY AGENCY
VIENNA, 26-30 SEPTEMBER 2022**

Your Excellency, the President of the General Conference,

Your Excellency, Mr. Rafael Grossi, Director General of the International Atomic Energy Agency,

Distinguished Delegates,

Ladies and Gentlemen,

The African Commission on Nuclear Energy (AFCONE) congratulates Your Excellency the President of the General Conference, on your election as President of the 66th Regular Session of the IAEA General Conference.

Mr. President,

Distinguished Delegates,

I am pleased to inform you that in May 2022, the AFCONE successfully initiated the 5th Conference of States Parties to the Treaty of Pelindaba.

The Conference elected a new AFCONE Commission.

That was followed by the appointment of AFCONE's new Executive Secretary who will continue to steer AFCONE towards furthering the global non-proliferation regime and the advancement of sustainable development and prosperity in Africa through the effective implementation of the Treaty of Pelindaba,

Mr. President,

Distinguished Delegates,

With regard to the furthering of nuclear non-proliferation in Africa and globally, AFCONE is working closely with African State Parties, with the IAEA and other partners to develop capacity in meeting safeguards and nuclear security obligations that African States have taken under the Treaty. Recent successes in this regard involve the development of a reporting template for State Parties, as well as arrangements for capacity building through training courses. .

A case in point is an ambitious cooperation programme for training that the African Commission on Nuclear Energy is currently developing with STUK – The Radiation and Nuclear Safety Authority of Finland, on behalf of the European Commission.

Mr. President,

Distinguished Delegates,

With regard to promoting the peaceful uses of nuclear energy in Africa, the IAEA is a key partner of AFCONE. AFCONE is working with the African Union Commission, and raising awareness among African States about the Rays of Hope initiative of Director General Grossi, in order to enable access to the 70% of Africans currently without access to radiotherapy for Cancer treatment.

Article 8 of the Treaty of Pelindaba encourages African States to make use of the programme of technical assistance available in IAEA and, in particular to strengthen cooperation under the African Regional Cooperation Agreement for Research, Training and Development Related to Nuclear Science and Technology (also known as AFRA). The Memorandum of Understanding between AFCONE and the IAEA also highlights the necessity of cooperation between AFCONE and AFRA.

In order to avoid duplication of effort, and to ensure the maximum benefit for African States from the peaceful applications of nuclear energy, the African Commission on Nuclear Energy is striving to coordinate activities between the principal African nuclear stakeholders – namely AFCONE (the African treaty organization), the AFRA agreement, the Forum of Nuclear Regulatory Bodies in Africa (FNRBA), and the IAEA. In this regard, a cooperation agreement was signed between AFCONE and AFRA in September 2020. Also as part of this strategy, the AFCONE organised in March 2021 a meeting between the IAEA, AFRA, the FNRBA and AFCONE.

The African Commission of Nuclear Energy is enjoying the political support of the African Union in its efforts to efficiently coordinate and streamline nuclear cooperation in Africa, with the goal of achieving the optimum and fit for purpose benefits for African States. At the 3rd African Union Commission Ministerial Meeting on Education, Science & Technology that was held in Addis Ababa (Ethiopia) in December 2019, the African Union mandated AFCONE to develop, with the IAEA, a programme to promote the use of nuclear energy for sustainable development in areas such as agriculture, health, infrastructure, mining, security, water, energy, and environment among others; and to carryout capacity building, education and training activities for the safe and secure use of nuclear energy.

**Mr. President,
Distinguished Delegates,**

The time is right, and the time is now for African States to deliberately strengthen and reinforce their participation in global nuclear cooperation and interactions, within the framework of the Treaty of Pelindaba and other relevant multilateral arrangements, and through coordination and cooperation via AFCONE

as stipulated the Treaty of Pelindaba. The Memorandum of Understanding that was signed this morning between the Executive Secretary of AFCONE and the Director General of the IAEA is very timely, and will provide one of the key pillars for advancing African progress in the peaceful nuclear arena; including the introduction of nuclear power in the electricity mixes of African Countries.

Currently, 80% of Africans are without electricity. One of the priorities in the AFCONE programme of work is to bridge the energy gap in Africa, through inter alia, coordinating cooperation between and among African States, and enhancing cooperation with the IAEA and other partners in areas such as nuclear safety and radiological protection.

It is also worth mentioning here that AFCONE, in close cooperation with the IAEA Department of Nuclear Energy, in May 2022, in Pretoria, South Africa, hosted a Workshop on Promoting Effective Interactions Among Nuclear Industry entities and Regulatory Bodies in Countries Introducing Nuclear Power Programmes.

Mr. President,

Distinguished Delegates,

The AFCONE is pleased to announce that the universalization of the Treaty of Pelindaba is progressing in the right direction. In 2022, two African Union States – namely the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC), and the Kingdom of Morocco, ratified the Pelindaba Treaty, bringing the total number of State Parties to the Treaty to forty-four (44) members.

Mr. President,

Distinguished Delegates,

In spite of the many achievements that we celebrate in the nuclear energy space, AFCONE recognizes that there are still concerns and hurdles to be overcome.

In this regard, I recall the recent 10th Review Conference of the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty (NPT), which was concluded on 26 August 2022, without an outcome. The AFCONE urges the community of States to strive to find common ground, in order to guarantee the success of the next NPT Review Conference.

In conclusion, I express my sincere thanks to the IAEA and all AFCONE partners for their support to the AFCONE, and for the important roles that they play in furthering peace and development in the world.

Thank you

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