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AN AFRICAN NUCLEAR-WEAPON-FREE ZONE (NWFZ)

Report by the Director General to the General Conference

1. In resolution GC(XXXVIII)/RES/17 on this subject, the General Conference last year:

commended the African States "for their efforts towards the establishment of an African Nuclear-Weapon-Free Zone" and requested the Director General "to continue to assist them in this regard".

In the latter connection the resolution also requested the Director General:

"to report on the implementation of this resolution to the General Conference at its thirty-ninth regular session under an agenda item entitled 'An African Nuclear-Weapon-Free Zone'."

This report is pursuant to that request.

2. In Resolution GC(XXXVIII)/RES/17, the General Conference welcomed specifically the progress made towards the conclusion of a treaty on an African Nuclear-Weapon-Free Zone on the basis of the Declaration on the Denuclearization of Africa, adopted by the Summit of the Organization of African Unity (OAU) at its first ordinary session, held in Cairo from 17-21 July 1964, and of resolution A/RES/48/86 adopted on 16 December 1993 by the General Assembly of the United Nations. In that respect, it may be recalled that, in 1993, the United Nations asked the Agency to help the Group of Experts designated by the United Nations in co-operation with the OAU by preparing draft treaty provisions relevant to verification requirements in a future NWFZ in Africa. The Agency did so. Last year's report to the General Conference (document GC(XXXVIII)/13) explained the Agency's activities in this regard. A senior Agency official had participated in the meetings of the Group of Experts held at Windhoek from 16 to 25 March 1994 and Addis Ababa from 11 to 14 May 1994 and assisted with work on draft treaty provisions as relevant to verification.

3. On 19 December 1994 the United Nations General Assembly adopted a further resolution 49/138, which inter alia requested the Secretary-General of the United Nations, in consultation with the Organization of African Unity (OAU), to take action to enable the Group of Experts to finalize the drafting of a treaty on a nuclear-weapon-free zone in Africa. Subsequently, the United Nations again requested the Director General of the Agency to assist the Group of Experts in finalizing the draft treaty.

4. Thus, pursuant to the request in resolution (GC(XXXVIII)/RES/17 and as further requested by the United Nations, the Assistant Director General for External Relations participated in the further meeting of the Expert Group held in Pelindaba, South Africa from 29 May to 2 June 1995. This was in order to help the Group of Experts to continue to prepare draft treaty provisions pertaining to verification requirements in a future NWFZ in Africa.

5. At Pelindaba, the Group of Experts reached agreement on the draft text of a treaty establishing an African NWFZ. This text, inter alia, would entrust to the Agency the task of verifying compliance with the peaceful use undertakings of the parties to the Zone. The report of the Group of Experts and the draft treaty were considered by the meetings of the OAU Council of Ministers and of the African Heads of State which took place in Addis Ababa from 21 June to 28 June 1995. The draft treaty will be submitted to the fiftieth session of the United Nations General Assembly.