



**SUBMISSION BY SOUTH AFRICA TO THE REPORT OF THE SECRETARY-
GENERAL ON THE GROUP OF SCIENTIFIC AND TECHNICAL EXPERTS ON
NUCLEAR DISARMAMENT VERIFICATION
A/RES/79/240**

South Africa supports further work on nuclear disarmament verification. However, caution should be exercised against duplication of work on nuclear disarmament verification undertaken in United Nations (UN) processes. In this regard, it will be important to consider how the relationship between the Group of Scientific and Technical Experts (GSTE) on Nuclear Disarmament Verification and existing mechanisms, especially the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) as well as the work being undertaken by the Working Group on Article 4 of the Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons (TPNW), will work.

Consideration should also be given to how the GSTE can contribute to the work of the Working Group on Article 4 of the TPNW since it is also looking at removal of deployed nuclear weapons; dismantlement and storage of warhead components; elimination or irreversible conversion of all nuclear-weapon-related facilities; and placement of nuclear material and facilities under international safeguards, with the IAEA. Additionally, verification of the correctness and completeness of the baseline declarations of nuclear material once the State concerned declares that it no longer possesses nuclear weapons or nuclear explosive devices is also being dealt with within the TPNW.

It would be useful to provide clarity on how the mandate of the GSTE will fit in with a current instrument like the TPNW or other instruments to be negotiated since it is stated that the GSTE will not be tasked to negotiate any treaty on nuclear disarmament. Prior to the negotiation of the Comprehensive Test Ban Treaty (CTBT), there was a similar structure which contributed to crafting of the international monitoring system as part of the CTBT i.e. Ad Hoc Group of Scientific Experts to Consider International Cooperative Measures to Detect and to Identify Seismic Events. With the current proposed GSTE there seems to be less clarity provided.

There is need to guard against attempts by some actors to complicate the issue of nuclear disarmament verification to such a degree that it may cast aspersions about the potential credibility of any nuclear disarmament verification regime and the reliability of assurances that obligations have are being implemented. These could then be used as arguments against progress on nuclear disarmament and the realisation of a world without nuclear weapons.