



## **South African General Statement at the Third Meeting of States Parties to the Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons**

**04 March 2025**

Mr President,

South Africa would like to congratulate you and thank you and your team for your efforts as we have prepared for the Third Meeting of States Parties. Please be assured of the full support of my delegation.

Mr President,

It has been 80 years since the world witnessed first-hand the destructive consequences of the use of nuclear weapons and their long-lasting impact. We would have thought that our knowledge of the destruction caused by nuclear weapons would have relegated these horrendous weapons to the annals of history. Yet, the constant threat of nuclear annihilation remains, inherent in the possession of nuclear weapons by a handful of states in total disregard to the safety and security of humanity. It must be asserted that the world cannot await for another Hiroshima or Nagasaki before finally mustering the political will to eliminate these weapons from global arsenals.

Mr President,

South Africa has been a strong and consistent advocate of nuclear disarmament and has played a significant role in the development and promotion of the TPNW. Our support for this Treaty is rooted in our own history, as well as our broader vision for global security and non-proliferation. We reconfirm our strong commitment to the underlying rationale and the goals of the Treaty, to work towards much needed progress on nuclear disarmament and foremost, towards the attainment and maintenance of a world free of nuclear weapons.

President,

We are witnessing an upsurge in value attached to nuclear deterrence and extended nuclear security guarantees, an amplified nuclear arms race with expansion and modernisation of nuclear arsenals, the advancement of technological developments that have the potential to be misused and an ever-growing risk of a nuclear detonation whether by miscalculation or design.

South Africa regrets that in spite of strong criticism by the international community, the doctrine of nuclear deterrence continues to hold sway in the strategic thinking of the nuclear-armed States, and gaining prominence in an increasing number of non-nuclear-weapon States that are under extended nuclear security guarantees. The discourse in some States on the need to have their own nuclear weapons only reinforces the argument that the nuclear deterrence doctrine encourages the proliferation of nuclear weapons. This takes place at a time when every effort should be directed towards the reduction and elimination of these weapons of mass destruction. We need to restate our conviction that states who think they must rely on nuclear weapons are on a mistaken and dangerous path. We need to transform the paradigm of deterrence into one of nuclear disarmament.

Mr President,

This third Meeting of States Parties provides us with an opportunity to take stock of the implementation of our Treaty, to further strengthen it and to continue with our collaborative approach, which has been the hallmark of the TPNW.

The doors into this Treaty have always been open. A major task lies ahead of us, which is ensuring that everybody comes into the fold of this Treaty.

For South Africa, universalisation of the Treaty not only comprises increasing signatures and ratifications but more importantly that it promotes the underlying imperative for the total elimination of nuclear weapons, which is their inherent risks and catastrophic humanitarian consequences. Concerted efforts must be made to reach out to all States as we work towards this tangible goal of ridding the world of these dangerous and harmful weapons.

Mr President,

Any use of nuclear weapons would result in catastrophic humanitarian consequences that would have a global impact. There is increasing public concern about a nuclear confrontation. Accordingly, we believe that the political declaration issued by this meeting needs to send a strong message to the global citizenry expressing our concern at the undesirable developments that undermine the shared aspiration for a world free of nuclear weapons. We need to condemn any and all nuclear threats, irrespective of the circumstances. We need to address hardening stance on the value of nuclear weapons which is polarising the non-proliferation regime.

Mr President,

The decisions we take at this MSP will continue to pave the way for implementation of the Treaty as we move towards the First Review Conference of our Treaty. South Africa has availed itself to Preside over the First Review Conference and we trust that the confidence of States Parties will be placed in us to steer this crucial undertaking.

In conclusion Mr President, the importance of international cooperation, diplomacy and dialogue remains more imperative than ever in advancing disarmament initiatives and fostering trust among States. A mammoth task lies ahead of us but it is one that we all should be ready for, considering that we all have a stake in it, for the very survival of humanity.

I thank you.