

*Towards a NUCLEAR PAN-AFRICANISM*

Thank You Hubert for hosting this workshop and inviting me to keynote this important event.

Let me also express my gratitude to the Norwegian Government and the Nuclear Threat Initiative for their generous support that makes this workshop possible today.

I have come to this workshop today for two reasons. First, this is a workshop led by an African institute and addressed to the African nuclear community. As an African myself I consider these efforts to bring together the African security community pivotal. Second, the topic of this workshop is timely and for Africa quite critical. As more and more African countries express interest in enjoying the benefits of nuclear technology and its various civilian applications, let us all remember our duties and responsibility as signatories of the Pelindaba Treaty, the CTBT and the NPT. And let us make sure that investments in nuclear technology be made in line with our international obligations as responsible states.

In my speech today let me therefore address three broad questions:

1. Where is the global nuclear community heading today?
2. What should we expect from the NPT 2020?
3. And what can the African contribution be?

I offer these reflections in hope to stimulate a good discussion afterwards.

**First: Where is the global nuclear community heading today?**

This is the million-dollar question. The true answer is: nobody truly knows. Divergent priorities and major changes in nuclear norms and institutions are

certainly making difficult any prediction. From my standpoint three main trends are clear:

1. **The divide between the nuclear weapons states and non-nuclear weapons states is deepening and widening.** This means that traditional multilateral avenues for diplomatic exchanges - such as the NPT and CTBT – might become increasingly paralyzed over issues and decisions.
2. **A flourishing of nuclear disarmament initiatives, although welcome, is fragmenting** the unity among non-nuclear weapons states: examples ICANN/TPNW – Swedish Initiative, CEND and others
3. **Rising animosity and competition among nuclear weapons states is leading to contestation of previously accepted norms of behavior.**

### **What should we expect from the NPT 2020?**

Well given the challenges I have underlined above, expectations have to be lowered and an urgent question ought to be pondered: given the context in which we are living in, what is realistically achievable? And what is really desirable?

For me, whether the NPT Review Conference ends with a final communique or not has modest importance. Success at the NPT for me means three fundamental things:

- **The importance and value that countries attribute to CTBT in the NPT negotiations.** We cannot continue to fool ourselves. We need a common ground to restart from. We need an existing instrument on which we can rebuild trust and confidence in each other. One of these instruments exist and has been signed by 185. Unless countries use CTBT and its almost universal support as bridge-building instrument among multiple nuclear communities, very little will be achieved, I am afraid.

- **The attitude of states in the actual negotiations:** are states negotiating from the center or from the margins? Are they attempting to compromise or they approach each issue with their national interest only in mind?
- **The fresh contribution to negotiation by regional groups – Africa in particular - who have stood at the margins of these conversations for far too long.**

And this leads to me to the third and final question: **what can the African contribution be?**

We are experiencing a race to the hearts and minds of African Countries today. Major developed powers are launching and sustaining strategic dialogues with our African countries because of our economic and demographic prospects.

In the nuclear energy business, too, Africa has become the new frontier for investments. According to the International Atomic Energy Agency:

*A third of the almost 30 countries currently considering nuclear power are in Africa. Egypt, Ghana, Kenya, Morocco, Niger, Nigeria and Sudan have already engaged with the IAEA to assess their readiness to embark on a nuclear programme. Algeria, Tunisia, Uganda and Zambia are also mulling the possibility of nuclear power.*

As many African leaders have remarked - Africa is hungry for energy, and nuclear power could be part of the answer for an increasing number of countries.

This offers to our continent an extraordinary opportunity: to work closely together to ensure that all of us can enjoy the benefits of nuclear energy, while minimizing the risks that are associated to it. From safety to nuclear nonproliferation and nuclear security, any investment in nuclear technology requires strong cooperation with neighboring countries, a culture of

transparency and accountability and a willingness to work together to overcome technological and security issues.

Nuclear investments in Africa can prompt strong nuclear Pan-Africanism if we choose to work to strengthen regional nuclear institutions for the benefits of all our societies. Africa has, after all, an illustrious record. We are a proud regional nuclear weapons free zone. Many of our countries support and abide by the Pelindaba treaty the cornerstone of our commitment to maintain Africa free of nuclear weapons. The establishment of AFCONE – the African Commission for Nuclear Energy sands to remind us of what we can achieve when we work together towards significant investments in technology and energy security.

What should the Africa Position Be at the NPT 2020?

Three proposals:

1. Let's get to the NPT 2020 with pledges for the ratifications of the CTBT. It is important to align the African commitment towards Pelindaba and the CTBT.
2. Let's submit an African paper that re-emphasizes our complete commitment towards the three goals of disarmament, non-proliferation and access to nuclear energy. These are the pillars of the NPT and are inseparable.
3. Finally, let's submit a proposal to boost Africa commitment to nuclear education. In order to become responsible nuclear countries, it is imperative for all of us to invest in a thriving generation of nuclear scientists. We have to improve our educational curriculum, our scientific training and the opportunities for our young scientists to work and study abroad.

These are some ideas but many others can be put on the table. Let me stop here and let me open the floor for discussion. I look forward to hearing your views and to work towards a strong Africa participation to the NPT 2020.

Thank you