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**SIXTH ORDINARY SESSION OF THE AFRICAN
COMMISSION ON NUCLEAR ENERGY**

**ADDIS ABABA, ETHIOPIA
2 DECEMBER 2015**

**WELCOMING REMARKS BY
MR. EL GHASSIM WANE, DIRECTOR OF THE PEACE AND SECURITY DEPARTMENT**

**Distinguished members of the African Commission on Nuclear Energy,
Ladies and Gentlemen,**

On behalf of the Chairperson of the Commission of the African Union, Dr. Nkosazana Dlamini-Zuma, the Depositary of the African Nuclear Weapon-Free Zone Treaty (the Treaty of Pelindaba), I have the great pleasure of welcoming you to the Sixth Ordinary Session of African Commission on Nuclear Energy (AFCONE). The convening of this meeting highlights, once again, our region's commitment to the shared goal of a world without nuclear weapons - a world in which nuclear sciences and technology are used for the sole purpose of advancing human and socio-economic development.

This Session is also an important opportunity to continue working towards the full and effective operationalization of AFCONE. The important role that AFCONE will play cannot be overstated. This role is not only limited to ensuring States Parties compliance with their nuclear non-proliferation obligations; it also include enhancing regional and international cooperation to promote the peaceful applications of nuclear sciences and technology in support of socio-economic development, particularly in the areas of health, agriculture, industry and energy. It is our hope that AFCONE will work towards ensuring that all States Parties can access and benefit from such applications.

Furthermore, AFCONE is also expected to actively engage in the international dialogue and efforts towards strengthening the global non-proliferation regime and to work in tandem with other Nuclear Weapon Free Zones towards complete nuclear disarmament.

I wish to seize this opportunity to call on all concerned States that have not yet done so to ratify or accede to the Treaty of Pelindaba and its Protocols as soon as possible in recognition of the Zone's nuclear-weapon-free status.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

Since the entry into force of the Pelindaba Treaty, in 2009, the African Union Commission has endeavored to extend all the required support to AFCONE to enable it fully assume its responsibilities, as outlined in the Treaty and the Programme of Work adopted in 2012. To date, the African Union Commission, acting as an interim secretariat, has supported the convening of three Conferences of States Parties and five Ordinary Sessions of AFCONE. These forums were instrumental in discussing, developing and adopting key operational documents to advance the implementation of the Pelindaba Treaty.

The Commission, acting on behalf of AFCONE, has also worked closely with the Host Country, South Africa, on negotiating the host agreement for the headquarters of AFCONE and its Secretariat. We are very glad to announce that the Host Agreement was signed by the Chairperson of the Commission and the Minister of International Relations and Cooperation of the Republic of South Africa during a ceremony held in Addis Ababa on 4 November 2015.

While commendable progress has been made, we should, however, acknowledge that much more remains to be done to ensure the effective implementation of the programme of work of AFCONE, including through the provision of necessary secretariat facilities and staff. To this end, we urge AFCONE to actively engage States Parties to ensure that they provide the necessary financial support to enable AFCONE discharge its mandate in an effective and sustainable manner. The Commission will present, to the next session of AFCONE, a more detailed update on the progress to date and proposals on the way forward.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

In concluding, I wish to welcome you, once again, at the AU Headquarters and to assure you that the African Union Commission will continue to provide AFCONE with the necessary operational and secretarial support till the time when the Secretariat is fully operational and ready to take on this important task.

Thank you.