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IMPLEMENTATION OF THE DECLARATION ON THE
DENUCLEARIZATION OF AFRICA

Letter dated 11 July 1991 from the Permanent Representative
of South Africa to the United Nations addressed to the
Secretary-General

I have the honour, with reference to the announcement by the South African State President on 27 June 1991, a copy of which is attached, that South Africa would accede to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons, to inform you that on 10 July 1991, His Excellency Mr. H. H. Schwarz, Ambassador of South Africa to the United States of America, deposited the appropriate Instrument of Accession in Washington, D.C. (see annex).

In taking this step, the South African authorities reaffirm their commitment to a nuclear-weapon-free zone in southern Africa and to the use of nuclear energy for peaceful purposes. They trust that it will open the way for South Africa to resume an active participation in the work of the international nuclear community and, in particular, the International Atomic Energy Agency.

I should be grateful if this letter, and its annex, could be circulated as a document of the General Assembly under item 58 of the preliminary list.

(Signed) Jeremy B. SHEARAR
Ambassador
Permanent Representative

* A/46/50.

ANNEX

Press release on South African accession to the NPT:
statement by President F. W. de Klerk at Pretoria on
27 June 1991

(issued at New York on 1 July 1991)

At its last meeting on 26 June 1991 before the mid-term recess, the South African Cabinet has finally approved South Africa's accession to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT). Accession will be effected as soon as the required constitutional and administrative arrangements have been made. To this end steps have already been initiated.

It will be recalled that my predecessor in a media statement as far back as 21 September 1987 stated, inter alia:

"The Republic of South Africa is prepared to commence negotiations with each of the nuclear weapon States on the possibility of signing the Non-Proliferation Treaty. At the same time the Republic of South Africa will consider including in these negotiations safeguards on its installations subject to the NPT conditions. The nature of these negotiations will depend on the outcome of the 31st General Conference of the IAEA to be held in Vienna as from 22 September.

"South Africa hopes that it will soon be able to sign the NPT and has decided to open discussions with others to this end. Any safeguards agreement which might subsequently be negotiated with the IAEA would naturally be along the same lines as, and in conformity with, agreements with other NPT signatories."

Since then major events in Central and Eastern Europe have changed the world order dramatically. The cold war has subsided. The last Cuban troops have withdrawn from Angola, a month ahead of schedule. The threat of a conventional military conflict in the southern African region involving super-Power rivalry has diminished substantially. World wide there has been a growing acceptance of a commitment to the peaceful resolution of regional conflicts. Following numerous discussions with the three Depository States, the United States of America, the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics and the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland, and other interested parties the South African Government indicated in September 1990 its willingness to accede to the Treaty in the context of a nuclear-free zone in southern Africa.

Recent positive developments in the region, including the accession to the NPT by Zambia and the United Republic of Tanzania, have further enhanced the environment for peace and security. South Africa welcomes these accessions.

We are therefore hopeful that these developments, including South Africa's own accession to the Treaty will now make it possible to achieve the longstanding goal of a nuclear-weapon-free zone in southern Africa.

South Africa's position in the international community has changed so fundamentally that the process of normalizing its international position has now become irreversible. Its own accession to the Non-Proliferation Treaty also reaffirms its commitment not only to take its rightful place in the international community but also to play a positive and constructive role in the process.

South Africa has established an advanced nuclear technology base and nuclear industry. Accession to the NPT will facilitate the international exchange of nuclear technology which is not only important for the maintenance and further development of South Africa's own nuclear programme, but will also be to the benefit of its neighbouring States and the international nuclear community.
