

# African Regional Seminar on the Universalisation of the TPNW

Pretoria, South Africa  
30-31 January 2023

## Summary of the Seminar

1. The Department of International Relations and Cooperation of South Africa (DIRCO), in its capacity as co-facilitator of the Working Group on Universalisation of the Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons (TPNW) and in partnership with the International Campaign to Abolish Nuclear Weapons (ICAN) and International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC), convened an African Regional Seminar on the Universalisation of the Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons (TPNW) in Pretoria, South Africa, from 30–31 January 2023.
2. Participants included delegates from 37 Member States of the African Union, together with representatives of the African Union, the African Commission on Nuclear Energy (AFCONE), the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC), the International Campaign to Abolish Nuclear Weapons (ICAN), civil society organisations and academia.
3. Mr Alvin Botes, Deputy Minister of International Relations and Cooperation of South Africa, welcomed participants to the Seminar. Opening remarks were also delivered by Ms Beatrice Fihn, Executive Director of ICAN; Mr Jules Amoti, Head of the ICRC Delegation in Pretoria; Ambassador Adeoye Bankole, AU Commissioner for Peace and Security; and Ms Izumi Nakamitsu, UN Under-Secretary-General for Disarmament Affairs.
4. Taking stock of the TPNW from a regional perspective, sessions were held on the risks of the use of nuclear weapons and their catastrophic humanitarian consequences; the relationship between the TPNW and the global and African disarmament architecture; the scope of the TPNW and the process required for its signature, ratification and accession; the role of African governments in implementing and universalising the Treaty; as well as the contributions of African States in the lead-up to and at the Second Meeting of States Parties to the TPNW scheduled for 27 November to 1 December 2023 in New York.

5. The seminar highlighted the complementarity of the TPNW with the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty (NPT), the Comprehensive Test Ban Treaty (CTBT) and other nuclear disarmament mechanisms.
6. It was recalled that Africa's recognition of the importance of addressing the issue of denuclearisation dates back to 1964 when the Assembly of Heads of State and Government of the Organization of African Unity (OAU), at its First Ordinary Session held in Cairo from 17 to 21 July, adopted decision [AHG/Res.II(I)] on the Denuclearization of Africa. This declaration was endorsed by the United Nations General Assembly.
7. Additionally, it was highlighted that the TPNW shares the common aim of the Treaty of Pelindaba (African Nuclear-Weapon-Free Zone Treaty). AFCONE recognises the TPNW as reinforcing the global disarmament and non-proliferation regime and has called upon African States to support its universalisation and implementation.
8. ICAN and the ICRC presented an overview of the provisions of the Treaty, its obligations and scope, the procedure to sign and ratify it, as well as possible support and assistance that may be provided to governments to join and implement it.
9. It was recalled that at the First Meeting of States Parties (1MSP) of the TPNW, States Parties committed to making universalisation a priority. The Declaration of the 1MSP stated that States Parties "will not rest until the last state has joined the Treaty", and the Vienna Action Plan dedicated 14 of its 50 actions to universalisation.
10. Participants provided updates about the status of the Treaty in their country, the process required to join the Treaty and where it currently stands, shared lessons learned and exchanged views on how to advance the Treaty in their country.
11. It was highlighted that African states have been leaders on nuclear disarmament and played a leading role during the negotiations of the TPNW and have promoted universalisation of the Treaty ever since its adoption. Participants shared some of the activities and efforts their governments have made to implement and universalise the Treaty.
12. As co-facilitators of the Working Group on universalisation established at the 1MSP, Ambassador Syed Mohamad Hasrin Aidid of Malaysia and Mr Zaheer Laher, Chief Director: UN Political, Peace and Security at the Department of International Relations and Cooperation of South Africa, shared the plans of the Working Group for 2023, in the lead-up to the Second Meeting of States Parties to the TPNW.

13. Participants also shared their expectations for this important meeting, expressed the resolve to increase the membership of the Treaty, and shared views on how Africa can contribute to making the Second Meeting of States Parties a success.