



In the spotlight

Gérard Kamanda wa Kamanda, Minister of Scientific Research and Technology, Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC)

Q: *The Treaty of Pelindaba establishing the African Nuclear-Weapon-Free Zone (NWFZ) has been signed by almost all African nations, which makes it in numerical terms the largest in the world. The members of the African NWFZ are therefore potentially important players in strengthening the global nuclear non-proliferation regime.*

How does the African NWFZ contribute to global nuclear arms control and disarmament?

A: The African countries and their leaders consider nuclear-weapon-free zones one of the most effective means to prevent horizontal and vertical proliferation of nuclear weapons. The final objective is to create a world entirely free of nuclear weapons.

Thus, the establishment of an African nuclear-weapon-free zone contributes to this goal of nuclear non-proliferation. It encourages co-operation in the field of peaceful uses of nuclear energy and promotes general and complete disarmament as an ultimate goal.

The majority of African countries signed the Treaty on the Non-proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT). Fifty-one African States signed the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty (CTBT) and 27 have ratified it as of 12 July 2005. The Treaty of Pelindaba was signed by 52 and ratified by 20 countries. The DRC Parliament ratified the Treaty of Pelindaba on 31 May 2005 and the President published the relevant law on 7 June 2005. This will bring the number of ratifications of the Treaty of Pelindaba to 21, once DRC has deposited its instruments of ratification with the Commission of the African Union (AU).

Q: *The vision of the African leaders to spare Africa the nuclear arms race was expressed as early as 1964 at the first Organization of African Unity (OAU)*

summit meeting. It took three decades to transform the vision into reality.

How is South Africa's decision to dismantle its nuclear weapons programme connected to the establishment of the African NWFZ?

“I think the case of South Africa which dismantled its nuclear capacity should encourage the other nuclear powers to end all nuclear explosive tests for all time.”

A: Subsequent to the Declaration of Cairo in July 1964, the OAU planned to sign an international agreement, under the supervision of the United Nations, banning the manufacture, the acquisition and the control of nuclear weapons in Africa.

The political commitment by the African leaders to implement the Cairo Declaration is also expressed in the 1986 Declaration of the OAU on Safety, Disarmament and Development. Over time, I think, it led to the unilateral decision made by South Africa in 1990 to dismantle its nuclear weapons manufacturing capacity and to access the NPT. By doing so, South Africa showed solidarity with other non-nuclear African NPT States. To honour this important decision by South Africa, the African leaders named the treaty establishing the African NWFZ the Pelindaba Treaty, after the site of South Africa's former nuclear weapons complex.

Q: *Although the Treaty of Pelindaba is still awaiting entry into force (having achieved 20 of the 28 necessary ratifications), it is nonetheless a landmark agreement.*

What efforts could be envisaged to speed up the ratification of the treaty?

A: Two possible avenues for initiatives are at hand: The first relates to the African members of the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) and the African Regional

Co-operation Agreement for Research, Training and Development related to Nuclear Science and Technology (AFRA). After DRC had ratified the CTBT, it became particularly active in encouraging other AFRA members, who have not yet ratified the Pelindaba Treaty, to do so as soon as possible.

The second initiative should emanate from the African Union, since the Chairperson of the AU Commission is the depositary of the treaty.

Q: *The Treaty of Pelindaba goes beyond earlier NWFZ models in a number of ways. Among others it includes measures which will result in preventing illicit trading of nuclear materials. This is of particular importance given current concerns about the global threat of nuclear terrorism.*

Could you explain the scope of the Pelindaba Treaty once it enters into force?

A: The ultimate objective of the Pelindaba Treaty is to strengthen international peace, to further regional security in Africa and to reinforce the NPT regime.



The treaty will require African States to conclude comprehensive IAEA Safeguard Agreements. This provision is intended to reduce the possibility that nuclear material could be diverted or stolen from African facilities by terrorists. Equally important in the light of increased concerns about terrorism is that the Pelindaba Treaty requires African States to upgrade the physical protection of nuclear materials, facilities, and equipment to meet the standards of the IAEA, as outlined in the Convention on the Physical Protection of Nuclear Materials.

The treaty further foresees the establishment of the African Commission on Nuclear Energy in order to promote the peaceful applications of nuclear technology; measures contained in the Convention of Bamako, which prohibits the import and the cross-boundary movement of dangerous waste in Africa, including radioactive waste; and to strengthen regional cooperation in the context of the AFRA Agreement.

Q: *In numerical terms, Africa is the largest of the six Treaty-defined regions of the Preparatory Commission for the CTBTO.*

How do African States view the global norm against nuclear weapon test explosions as set out by the CTBT?

A: I think the case of South Africa which dismantled its nuclear capacity should encourage the other nuclear powers to end all nuclear explosive tests for all time. The international norm against nuclear weapon test explosions will consolidate the regime established by the NPT and thus contribute to the fulfilment of the ultimate objective of nuclear disarmament and guarantee peace and collective security.

The CTBT and the Treaty of Pelindaba contribute to this end. The Executive Secretary of the CTBTO Preparatory Commission and the Chairperson of

the African Union should intensify their co-operation on this subject.

Q: *The Democratic Republic of the Congo is one of the 44 States listed in Annex 2 to the CTBT, whose ratification is required for its entry into force. DRC ratified the CTBT on 28 September 2004 as the 24th African nation and the third African Annex 2 State.*

What was the political process leading to this important decision in DRC?

A: DRC was the first uranium producing country in the world and the first one in Africa with a nuclear reactor. It provided uranium for the Manhattan Project, which made it possible for the United States of America to produce weapons of mass destruction, namely, the first two atomic bombs dropped on Hiroshima and Nagasaki in Japan during the Second World War.

The Democratic Republic of the Congo signed the CTBT on 4 October 1996 and pledged on several occasions to ratify it, without prejudging the decision by the National Assembly and before the Government was fully installed. Meetings were held between representatives of DRC and the Provisional Technical Secretariat (PTS) in New York in November 2001, in Kinshasa in February 2002 and in April 2003, as well as in Vienna during the General Conference of IAEA in September 2003. During the Vienna meeting, I promised in my capacity as Minister of Scientific Research and Technology to the Chief of External Relations of the PTS to submit the draft law concerning the CTBT ratification to the National Assembly.

Over the years the commitment of DRC to fight against nuclear proliferation has been underlined in numerous ways. These include its adherence to the NPT in August 1970 and to the IAEA Safeguards Agreements in November 1972, its adoption of a law on the protection against the dangers of ionizing

radiation and on the physical protection of nuclear materials and installations, its signature of the Additional Protocol to the IAEA Safeguards Agreements in April 2003 and adherence to the Convention on the Physical Protection of Nuclear Materials during the 48th Session of the General Conference of IAEA in September 2004.

The above list is the best proof that DRC is committed to reinforcing the nuclear non-proliferation regime and to ensuring nuclear safety. ■

Biographical note



The Hon. Gérard Kamanda wa Kamanda is Minister of Scientific Research and Technology of the Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC). He studied philosophy

and law at the University of Lovanium, Léopoldville, DRC, and holds an honorary Ph.D. from the State University of Haïti. He also participated in a Public Law and Public Administration training programme at the John Hopkins University, United States.

Mr Kamanda has held numerous positions in his diplomatic and political career, including, inter alia, Vice Secretary-General of the Organization of African Unity (1972-78), Permanent Representative of DRC to the United Nations in Geneva (1978) and in New York (1979-1983), President of the UN Security Council (1981), Minister of Foreign Affairs and International Cooperation (1983-85) and (1996-97), Minister of Justice (1985-87) and (1994-95) and Vice Prime Minister. He took up his present position in 2003. ■