

**DRAFT STATEMENT**

**BY**

**HON. NETUMBO NANDI NDAITWAH, DEPUTY PRIME MINISTER AND MINISTER OF INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS AND COOPERATION AT THE CONFERENCE ON FACILITATING THE ENTRY INTO FORCE OF THE COMPREHENSIVE NUCLEAR TEST BAN TREATY (ARTICLE XIV),**

**23 SEPTEMBER 2021,**

**NEW YORK**

**Presidents (South Africa and Italy)**

**Let me join others in congratulating you on your election as Presidents of the 12th session of the Article XIV Conference, and assure you of Namibia”s full support. I express our great appreciation for the work carried out by your predecessors Algeria and Germany. Furthermore, Namibia support the Declaration we just adopted.**

**Our appreciation goes to the UN Secretary General, Mr. Antonio Guterres for convening this Conference, and the Preparatory Commission for the organization given the unprecedented challenges posed by the COVID 19 pandemic.**

**Namibia further wishes to take this opportunity to thank the outgoing Executive Secretary, Dr. Lassina Zerbo, for his untiring commitment, dedication and professionalism in executing the mandate of the Commission to universalize the Treaty and ensure operational readiness of the Treaty’s verification regime. In the same vein, my delegation extends its warm welcome to Dr. Robert Floyd, the new Executive Secretary and assures him of Namibia’s full support and cooperation.**

**Presidents,**

**Namibia reaffirms that the key objective of this Conference is to promote the entry into force of the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty (CTBT), in accordance with Article XIV of the Treaty. We are however deeply concerned that 25 years after the Treaty opened for signature, the prospect of its entry into force remains uncertain.  As we observe the 25th anniversary of the CTBT, we reiterate that the Treaty remains a major instrument in the field of nuclear disarmament and non-proliferation, thus, the non-entry into force undermines the international community’s quest to achieve a world free of nuclear weapons.  The onus is upon us State Signatories and the Commission to popularize and promote the treaty through practical commitments to achieve its universalization and subsequent entry into force.**

**Presidents,**

**It will be amiss of us not to recognize the milestones achieved and progress made toward the universalization of the Treaty since its opening for signature. We are pleased to note that the number of signatures and ratifiers stands at 185 and 170, respectively. In this context, we warmly welcome the ratification of the Treaty by Cuba and the Union of Comoros since the last Article XIV Conference in 2019. We further reiterate our strong call on the remaining Annex 2 States whose signature and ratification are required for the Treaty to enter into force, to sign and ratify the Treaty without any further delay.**

**Presidents,**

**Pending the entry into force of the CTBT, Namibia stands by the commitments outlined in the conclusion of the 2010 NPT review conference, which calls for the cessation of all nuclear test explosions and ending the development of advanced new types of nuclear weapons. It is our zeal to achieve a complete nuclear disarmament globally and a world without nuclear weapons.  Thus, we call upon States to maintain all existing moratoria on nuclear weapon test explosion, and to refrain from any form or action of nuclear weapon testing that would undermine the Treaty’s objective and purpose. In this context, we look forward to the upcoming NPT review conference to be held early 2022. It is our belief that the conference would take a balanced approach by focusing in all the three pillars, with particular emphasis to peaceful uses, that is important for us considering that uranium is one of the natural resources which is God given to Namibia.**

**Presidents,**

**My delegation is moreover pleased to note that the International Monitoring System (IMS) and the International Data Centre (IDC) of the CTBT verification regime has demonstrated their effectiveness in bringing tangible scientific and civil benefit, including for tsunami warning, and other possible disaster alert systems.**

**In conclusion, Presidents, Namibia will continue to work relentlessly with other States to achieve the universalization and subsequent entry into force of the CTBT. In this regard, we call on all State Signatories to support the Article XIV Conference of the CTBT and the goals of the Treaty.**

**Thank you!**