

### *Regional Disarmament Initiatives in Africa and the Middle East*

The coming of the nuclear age prompted states to consider ways to control nuclear proliferation. Regional arms control regimes emerged as one response to the proliferation concern, often in the form of nuclear-weapon-free zones (NWFZs). NWFZs are designed to ban nuclear weapons within specific geographical areas on the initiative of the states of the region. NWFZs have been a suggested response to proliferation concerns since the late 1950s when the Polish government proposed the Rapacki Plan to ensure a denuclearized post-Second World War Central Europe. Today NWFZs are an integral part of the global non-proliferation regime. Indeed, Article 7 of the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty (NPT) ensures the right of states to set up NWFZs.

Latin America pioneered the creation of the first NWFZ, the Treaty of Tlatelolco, in 1967. Since then, other regional NWFZs have been successfully created: in 1985 the Pacific states signed the Rarotonga Treaty; in 1995 the South East Asian states adhered to the Bangkok Treaty; and in 1996 the African states signed the Pelindaba Treaty.

However, since 1996 further progress in the nuclear non-proliferation and arms control regime has stalled. The Comprehensive Test-Ban Treaty has not entered into force, the Central Asian NWFZ, under discussion since 1997, has yet to become a reality and the Pelindaba Treaty awaits fifteen more ratifications to enter into force.

UNIDIR's long-standing interest in NWFZs continues through its exploration of the current state of established zones and the prospects for the creation of new ones. In this regard, UNIDIR is publishing a history of the Pelindaba Treaty negotiations. Despite the fact that progress towards the African NWFZ was held up for years by the nuclear ambitions of one state, negotiations and discussions continued until South Africa gave up its nuclear weapons programme. As other regions faced with differing levels of armaments might find the African experience informative, UNIDIR and the League of Arab States are co-sponsoring a conference in Cairo to explore ways to apply the lessons learned in Africa and other regions to the Middle East, in the form of a zone free of weapons of mass destruction (WMD).

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## *The Treaty of Pelindaba: On the African Nuclear-Weapon-Free Zone*

Oluyemi Adeniji

In the flurry of measures proposed in the 1960s to control atomic weapons, NWFZs featured prominently as an achievable means towards the elimination of nuclear weapons. Among the first regions to decide on a continental NWFZ was Africa, which in 1964 adopted the Declaration on the Denuclearization of Africa. With the suspicion that a major country in the region, South Africa, was developing a nuclear weapon capability to defend its universally condemned policy of apartheid, Africa was hindered from pursuing the implementation of its Declaration. This situation persisted until 1991 when, taking advantage of the new developments in international relations, African states commenced the process of implementing the 1964 Declaration through a resolution of the United Nations General Assembly.

On 24 March 1993, the South African President, Frederick De Klerk, announced that South Africa had indeed built some nuclear weapons, but had subsequently destroyed them. He added that South Africa was ready to support and cooperate with other African states to negotiate a legal instrument on the denuclearization of Africa and promised his country's cooperation in the peaceful uses of nuclear technology. This statement provided further incentive for the pursuit of the African NWFZ and facilitated the invitation of South Africa to participate in the negotiations of a legally binding instrument, which commenced in Harare in April 1993.

Authored by Ambassador Oluyemi Adeniji, *The Treaty of Pelindaba: On the African Nuclear-Weapon-Free Zone* provides a detailed account of the negotiating history of the Treaty of Pelindaba. Ambassador Adeniji, who was Chairman of the Group of Experts that negotiated the Treaty and who enjoys vast experience in the diplomacy of arms control and disarmament, is particularly well placed to recount the proceedings of the series of discussions that led to the conclusion of the Treaty. The book, which is perhaps the most comprehensive analysis of a NWFZ treaty, should prove very useful to both students of arms control and disarmament as well as to future negotiators of NWFZs.

*The Treaty of Pelindaba: On the African Nuclear-Weapon-Free Zone*

Oluyemi Adeniji

UNIDIR, 2003, 360p.

Sales number: G.V.E.03.0.5

US\$28 (plus shipping and handling)

Order online at [www.unidir.org](http://www.unidir.org) or [www.un.org/Pub/sales.htm](http://www.un.org/Pub/sales.htm)

## ***Building a Weapons of Mass Destruction Free Zone in the Middle East: Global Non-Proliferation Regimes and Regional Experiences***

The Middle East, a region mired in political and military tensions, has long struggled with creating regional responses to proliferation concerns. The region first considered a NWFZ in 1974 when a proposal was put forward by Egypt and Iran. The United Nations has supported this idea through a number of General Assembly resolutions that note other regional precedents. At the end of the Gulf War in 1991, the Security Council called for a denuclearized Middle East in resolution 687. The 1995 NPT extension conference also adopted a resolution on a denuclearized Middle East.

In April 1990, Egypt proposed the creation of a WMD-free zone in the Middle East, thus encompassing nuclear, chemical and biological weapons as well as specific delivery systems. A key thrust of the initiative is to incorporate Israel into the nuclear non-proliferation regime, as it is not party to the NPT.

UNIDIR and the League of Arab States are sponsoring an international conference on the prospects for a WMD-free zone in the Middle East. The conference will address global non-proliferation regimes, consider regional experiences with establishing NWFZs, discuss the role of international organizations in verification and safeguards, and explore practical steps for creating a WMD-free zone in the region.

The invitation-only conference will be held in Cairo on 24–25 February.

UNIDIR will publish conference proceedings in Arabic and English.

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