

**MESSAGE OF THE UN SECRETARY-GENERAL  
AND THE STATEMENT AT THE SIGNING CEREMONY OF THE AFRICAN  
NUCLEAR-WEAPONS-FREE-ZONE**

**Cairo**

**April 11, 1996**

*It is indeed a great honour and privilege to deliver this message of the Secretary*

**Boutros Boutros-Ghali**

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Africa Mes.  
Ladies  
Honorable  
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Ladies*

**Message to the signing ceremony of  
the African Nuclear-Weapon-Free Zone Treaty**

**My greetings to the leaders from this great continent who have gathered here to participate in the signing ceremony of the African Nuclear-Weapon-Free Zone Treaty. It is particularly appropriate that you meet in Cairo, the city where the OAU Heads of State adopted the pioneering 1964 Declaration on the Denuclearization of Africa.**

**At that time, African leaders also undertook to conclude an international treaty, under United Nations auspices, not to manufacture or control atomic weapons. But, for a quarter of a century the preparation of this important document was stalled.**

**During the last five years, a number of significant developments have made it possible to pursue the objective for Africa's denuclearization in a treaty format. Political confidence has been built in the nuclear disarmament field by South Africa's accession to the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty as a non-nuclear weapon state Party. Africa has made new and urgent efforts to**

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**resolve long-standing conflicts that have affected its people.**

**Apartheid has been banished from the continent. New and vibrant democracies have taken root.**

**The establishment of an African nuclear-weapon-free zone will advance global disarmament norms and contribute to efforts to prevent the proliferation of nuclear weapons and strengthen the international non-proliferation regime. It will accelerate the stride towards a world free from nuclear weapons. It is a promising example to others wishing to contribute to broadening the areas of the world from which nuclear weapons will be forever proscribed.**

**Disarmament should be understood as a global enterprise, involving the United Nations, regional organizations, Member states and the international community as a whole. The African Nuclear-Weapon-Free Zone Treaty has been prepared under United Nations auspices in cooperation with the Organization of African Unity. It has shown the crucial role that the United Nations can play in encouraging and eventually attaining the desired goal of non-proliferation. It is a role central to the very ethos of the United**

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**Nations as it endeavours to fulfil the wish of the international community to turn the logic of non-proliferation into concerted action, to ensure - in President Nelson Mandela's phrase - "the convergence of word and deed".**

**Just as the architects of this important document drew on the experience of other regions, this Treaty will add to the general understanding of nuclear-weapon-free zones and can provide lessons in confidence building and non-proliferation for other regions. Equally important, it can provide a successful example of how the reduction of the threat of destruction, and preventing diversion of resources to fuel that threat, can be propitious for social development and human advancement.**

**I would like to express my deep appreciation of the gesture made by the Egyptian Government in hosting the Signing Ceremony of this Treaty. This is yet another proof of Egypt's strong interest in the cause of disarmament in general and regional disarmament endeavours in particular. On this historic occasion, I wish to pay tribute to His Excellency, President Hosni Mubarak, for his**

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**pioneering role in the effort towards the denuclearization of Africa.**

**As we pay tribute to the vision and statesmanship of Africa, let us not forget that the most safe, sure and swift way to deal with the threat of nuclear arms is to do away with them in every regard by having a nuclear-weapon-free world. This should be our vision of the future. No more production. No more testing. No more sales or transfers. Reduction, destruction and the eventual elimination of all nuclear weapons and the means of their manufacture should be humanity's great common cause.**