



Report

South Africa's Nuclear Nonproliferation Posture Remains Consistent

South Africa repeatedly has stated its commitment to nuclear nonproliferation since it ended its nuclear weapons program and signed the Nonproliferation Treaty^a (NPT) in July 1991.^b South Africa has a history of backing Iran's "peaceful" nuclear development.

Zuma Cabinet Maintaining Nuclear Status Quo

Since coming to power in April 2009, President Jacob Zuma's cabinet^c has maintained the post-1991 status quo and has not proposed major changes to South Africa's nuclear policies, to include its support for Iranian efforts to develop nuclear energy. It has continued to publicly encourage the peaceful use of nuclear energy for all states. In June 2008, Pretoria released its Nuclear Energy Policy^d for the Republic of South Africa,¹ which outlines aims to develop "an extensive nuclear energy program." According to the policy, leveraging nuclear energy would help South Africa "diversify" its primary energy resources, contribute to economic and technological development, and help "mitigate climate change."

South African officials continue to state their commitment to nuclear nonproliferation and have encouraged other African states to follow suit.

- In a 5 March joint statement issued after meetings in London, President Zuma and UK Prime Minister Gordon Brown said a world "free from nuclear weapons" was the "ultimate goal," and they "looked forward" to the 12-13 April Nuclear Security Summit in Washington, according to South Africa's nonprofit press agency SAPA.²
- In a statement at the 14 September 2009 International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) Conference in Vienna, South African Minister of Energy Dipuo Peters reiterated South Africa's pledge to nonproliferation. He urged other African states to ratify the Pelindaba Treaty,^c which would create a "nuclear weapon-free" African continent by prohibiting development, acquisition, or testing of nuclear explosive devices. The treaty says peaceful nuclear activities in Africa must conform to IAEA safeguards.^{3 4}

^a [Click here](http://www.un.org/en/conf/npt/2005/npttreaty.html) or go to www.un.org/en/conf/npt/2005/npttreaty.html to read the NPT.

^b South Africa acceded to the NPT on 10 July 1991. For information on other nonproliferation agreements South Africa has signed, go to the South African Department of Minerals and Energy website at www.dme.gov.za/energy/nuclear_np.stm.

^c For more information on the nuclear policy decisionmakers in the Zuma administration, see the 20 January 2010 Consultancy Africa Intelligence paper, **RSA's Key Nuclear Decision Makers in Zuma's Administration** (AFP20100113596002).

^d For more information on the outlook for South Africa's nuclear policy, see the 30 March OSC Summary, **Emerging Issues and Possible Future Trends in South Africa's Nuclear and Counter-Proliferation Landscape** (AFP20100330517001) based on Pretoria-based think tank Consultancy Africa Intelligence's March 2010 research paper.

^e Open for signature since 1996, the Pelindaba Treaty only came into force in June 2009 when Burundi ratified it, bringing the total number of ratifying states to 28 -- as required by the treaty. The treaty established the African Commission on Nuclear Energy, based in South Africa, to verify compliance. [Click here](#) to read the treaty. [Click here](#) for a list of countries that have signed and ratified the Treaty.

In international forums, South Africa has supported Iran's efforts to develop "peaceful" nuclear programs^f and opposed sanctions, citing Article IV of the NPT that signatories have an "inalienable" right to use nuclear energy in peaceful ways.

- Addressing an August 2006 session of the South Africa -- Iran joint bilateral commission, then Foreign Affairs Minister Nkosazana Dlamini-Zuma asserted that South Africa's position on Iran's use nuclear energy for "peaceful purposes" was "based on the NPT."⁵
- At a 24 March 2007 UN meeting on sanctions against Iran, and in a subsequently released statement from the office of the Permanent Mission of South Africa to the UN, Kumalo stated that South Africa intended to "promote dialogue to establish confidence in the nuclear programme of Iran" and expressed hope that the UNSC would allow the IAEA to fulfill its mandate of ensuring that Iran was complying with the NPT and would not preemptively punish Iran without evidence of a nuclear weaponry program.⁶
- At a 3 March 2008 UN Security Council (UNSC) meeting on the renewal of sanctions against Iran's alleged "proliferation of sensitive nuclear activities," South Africa's permanent representative to the UN, Ambassador Dumisani Kumalo -- then a nonpermanent member of the UNSC -- said though his country did not "wish to see a nuclear-weaponized Iran," neither did it want to deny the rights of any NPT signatory "to exploit the peaceful applications of nuclear technology."^{g 7}
- However, during its tenure as a nonpermanent member of the UNSC, South Africa voted in favor of sanctions against Iran. A 3 March 2008 South Africa statement to the UNSC detailed the country's reluctance, saying it only voted for the resolution to "preserve previous decisions of the Council, which Iran has not fully implemented,"⁸ referring to the requirements for Iran to cease enrichment-related and processing activities and allow the IAEA access to information and sites.⁹

^f For more information on South Africa's support for Iran's non-weapon nuclear program, see the 15 November 2006 OSC Analysis, **South Africa Likely To Use UNSC Seat To Defend Iran** (AFF20061115534001) and the 21 April 2006 OSC Analysis, **South Africa: Pretoria Unlikely To Support UN Action Against Iran in Nuclear Dispute** (AFF20060421364001).

^g South Africa held one of the 10 nonpermanent UNSC seats from 1 January 2007 to 31 December 2008.

¹ [OSC | | 1 June 2008 | | NUCLEAR ENERGY POLICY FOR THE REPUBLIC OF SOUTH AFRICA | | (U) | Website of the South African Government Department of Minerals and Energy website. URL:<http://www.dme.gov.za/energy/pdf/FINAL%20NUCLEAR%20ENERGY%20POLICY%20JUNE%202008.pdf>]

² [OSC | AFP20100305448014 | | 5 March 2010 | | RSA President Zuma, UK Prime Minister Brown Issue Joint Statement After Meeting | | (U) | (U) | Johannesburg link2media in English -- Press release service of the nonprofit press agency SAPA, known as SAPA PR; URL: <http://www.link2media.co.za>]

³ [OSC | | 14 September 2009 | | Text of Statement by RSA's Minister of Energy at IAEA General Conference 14 Sep | | (U) | [Description of Source: Pretoria South Africa Government Online WWW-Text in English -- official government website; Internet: <http://www.gov.za>]]

⁴ [OSC | | Accessed 7 April 2010 | | Pelindaba Text of the African Nuclear-Weapon-Free Zone Treaty | | (U) | Official website of the International Atomic Energy Agency. URL -- <http://www.iaea.org/About/Policy/GC/GC40/Documents/pelindab.html>]

⁵ [OSC | | 21 August 2006 | | SA supports Iran's "peaceful use" of nuclear energy | | (U) | Pretoria BuaNews Online in English -- South African Government News Service published by the Government Communication and Information System; URL: <http://www.buanews.gov.za/view.php?ID=06082208451001&coll=buanew06>]

⁶ [OSC | | Permanent Mission of South Africa to the UN - View | Statement by Ambassador DS Kumalo, Permanent Representative, to the United Nations Security Council on Non-Proliferation | 24 March 2007 | | http://www.southafrica-newyork.net/pmun/view_speech.php?speech=7976889 | 7 April 2010 |]

⁷ [OSC | | 3 March 2008 | | SECURITY COUNCIL TIGHTENS RESTRICTIONS ON IRAN'S PROLIFERATION-SENSITIVE NUCLEAR ACTIVITIES, INCREASES VIGILANCE OVER IRANIAN BANKS, HAS STATES INSPECT CARGO | | (U) | Official UN website. URL -- <http://www.un.org/News/Press/docs/2008/sc9268.doc.htm>]

⁸ [Open Source (Not OSC) | | Permanent Mission of South Africa to the UN | Statement in Explanation of Vote by Ambassador DS Kumalo of South Africa at the United Nations Security Council Vote on Non-Proliferation (Iran Resolution) | | http://www.southafrica-newyork.net/pmun/view_speech.php?speech=2483657 | 7 April 2010 |]

⁹ [Open Source (Not OSC) | | UN News Centre | Security Council tightens sanctions against Iran over uranium enrichment | 24 March 2007 | Security Council tightens sanctions against Iran over uranium enrichment - Mozilla Firefox | <http://www.un.org/apps/news/story.asp?NewsID=21997&Cr=Iran&Cr1> | 7 April 2010 |]