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The attached statement by the Minister for Foreign Affairs of South Africa is being circulated to the delegations attending the thirty-fourth regular session of the General Conference at the request of the Ambassador of South Africa.

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STATEMENT ON SOUTH AFRICA'S POSITION ON ACCESSION TO THE
NUCLEAR NON-PROLIFERATION TREATY, ISSUED BY THE MINISTER
OF FOREIGN AFFAIRS ON 17 SEPTEMBER 1990

On 21 September 1987 the South African State President indicated that South Africa hoped that it would soon be able to sign the NPT and had decided to open discussions with others to this end. He added that South Africa was an important uranium exporting country and also had a well developed nuclear programme. For these and other reasons consideration of accession to the NPT was a complex matter requiring thorough study and consultation.

Since then various discussions have taken place between South Africa and the three depository states: the United States of America, the U.S.S.R., and the United Kingdom in which South Africa sought clarification on the implications of accession.

During the past year major events of great historical importance have taken place in Central and Eastern Europe and in the U.S.S.R. which have led to a lessening of tension between the power blocs of the world.

Various African states have recently expressed the view that the African continent should become a nuclear weapons free zone. These views were again aired at the recently concluded NPT Review Conference in Geneva. The South African Government welcomes these suggestions. Indeed the South African Government has itself consulted a number of African Governments on the desirability of establishing a nuclear weapons free zone at least in the Southern African region. Such a move would further remove suspicions and should strengthen the economic and geographical cohesion of the region. It is of particular significance that one of South Africa's closest neighbours, Mozambique, deposited its instrument of accession to the NPT on 12 September 1990.

Following several rounds of discussions with the three depository states on the question of accession to the Non-Proliferation Treaty, the South African Government is prepared to accede to the Treaty in the context of an equal commitment by the other states in the Southern African region.

In the meantime the South African Government will continue to respect its non-proliferation responsibilities and commitments. For instance, the Government trusts that in the near future talks can commence with the International Atomic Energy Agency on concluding a comprehensive safeguards agreement on the country's nuclear facilities.

Viewed within the context of the Government's irreversible reform initiatives, the proposed action underscores South Africa's commitment to contribute to peace and regional security in Southern Africa.

South Africa is hopeful that the Thirty Fourth Annual General Conference of the International Atomic Energy Agency which is currently meeting in Vienna will reflect carefully on the significance of the direction taken by South Africa in order to facilitate peace and cooperation in the Southern African region.