

# **African Nuclear-Weapon-Free-Zone Treaty (The Pelindaba Treaty): Nigerian Status and the Journey so far:**

## **Abstract:**

A nuclear weapon is any explosive device capable of releasing nuclear energy in an uncontrolled manner. Nuclear Weapon Free Zone is a specified region in which countries commit themselves not to manufacture, acquire, test, use or possess nuclear weapons within the designated territory. These zones can range from single states to geographical regions or international areas. Within these zones, countries may only use nuclear energy for peaceful purposes only. Their establishment is recognized by Article VII of the Nuclear Nonproliferation Treaty (NPT). Five of such zones exist in the world today:- *Treaty of Tlatelolco; Treaty of Rarotonga; Treaty of Bangkok; The Treaty of Semipalatinsk; The Pelindaba Treaty*, while discussions is ongoing for other regions. The African Nuclear-Weapon-Free Zone Treaty also known as The Pelindaba Treaty was a product of 32-year effort seeking a nuclear weapon-free Africa. The Treaty and Protocols meet all seven international criteria established for supporting any proposed nuclear-weapon- free zone. It was negotiated and adopted under the auspices of the OAU and the United Nations at Pelindaba, South Africa, on June 2, 1995. Nigeria signed the treaty on 11 April 1996 and Ratified on 18<sup>th</sup> June 2001. The treaty with its three additional protocols has improved security and stability on the African continent by prevent a nuclear arms race in Africa and extra regional states from introducing nuclear weapons into Africa, it also serves as a tool for environmental protection by prohibiting the dumping of radioactive wastes in the zone. The Treaty prohibits among others manufacturing, stockpiling, acquisition, testing, possession, or stationing of nuclear explosive devices, as well as assistance to others in such activities, or seeking or receiving assistance in such activities, encouraging the dumping of radioactive wastes and other radioactive materials within its area of coverage, any armed attack against nuclear installations in the zone. It requires Parties to maintain the highest standards of physical protection of nuclear material, facilities, and equipments, promote peaceful nuclear activities and verification of their peaceful uses among others. The Treaty creates the African Commission on Nuclear Energy to monitor compliance and promote the peaceful use of nuclear energy. This article highlights some of the benefits of the treaty as well as accessing progress made by various parties since entry into force.

**Key Words:** Nuclear Energy, Nuclear Weapon free zone, Additional Protocols, Nuclear Nonproliferation Treaty, African Commission on Nuclear Energy, Radioactive Wastes

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