

Pelindaba Treaty: Notes for UPSC Exam

The Pelindaba Treaty, or African Nuclear Weapon Free Zone Treaty, establishes a Nuclear-Weapon-Free Zone in Africa. The treaty was signed in 1996 and came into effect with the 28th ratification on 15 July 2009.

This article will give details about the treaty, which candidates writing the IAS Exams will find useful.

History of the Pelindaba Treaty

The objective to create a nuclear free Africa began when the Organization of African Unity formally stated its aim for a treaty that would guarantee the denuclearization of Africa at its first Summit in Cairo in July 1964. The Treaty was opened for signature on 11 April 1996 in Cairo, Egypt.

All the States of Africa are eligible to become parties to the Treaty, which will enter into force upon its 28th ratification; the Protocols will also come into force at that time for those Protocol signatories that have deposited their instruments of ratification.

It was reported in 1996 that no African Arab state would ratify the Treaty until Israel denounces its nuclear weapons program. However, Algeria, Libya, and Mauritania have since ratified the Treaty.

The United Nations General Assembly has passed without a vote identical resolutions in 1997, 1999, 2001, 2003, and 2005 calling upon African States that have not yet done so to sign and ratify the Treaty as soon as possible so that it may enter into force without delay, and for States contemplated in Protocol III to take all necessary measures to ensure its speedy application.

What are the Protocols of the Pelindaba Treaty?

The Treaty has the following three Protocols.

- Under Protocol I, the United States, France, the United Kingdom, Russia and the People's Republic of China are invited to agree not to use or threaten to use a nuclear explosive device against any Treaty party or against any territory of a Protocol III party within the African zone.
- Under Protocol II, the United States, France, the United Kingdom, the Russian Federation and China are invited to agree not to test or assist or encourage the testing of a nuclear explosive device anywhere within the African zone.
- Protocol III is open to states with dependent territories in the zone and obligates them to observe certain provisions of the Treaty with respect to these territories; only Spain and

France may become Parties to it.

As of 11 March 2011, the United Kingdom, France, the Russian Federation and China have signed and ratified the Protocols, but the United States has yet to ratify. Spain has neither signed nor ratified Protocol III.

The United States has supported the concept of the denuclearization of Africa since the first United Nations resolution on this issue in 1965 and has played an active role in drafting the final text of the Treaty and Protocols. The United States signed Protocols I and II in 1996, but has not ratified them.