

# Position Paper

## Introduction

The Republic of South Africa feels that the global environmental issues, stark legal issues and nuclear quarrels that the world is plagued with strongly affect its country's people. The values of our country are rife in all of these debates with our variety of seasons causing divisions in our society that affect us more than other climates, the spread of misinformation being apparent in our society and politics and us being the only country to ever give up nuclear weapons after developing them. In terms of the environment and global crisis our country is deeply affected by climate change with our long borders and extreme heat causing droughts, storms and extreme conditions which severely affect our country and end the lives of thousands annually. In terms of the legal issues that this country and the globe faces we are very committed to combatting misinformation with our key focus being preventing the spread of misinformation during election times in order to ensure that our country remain being a healthy and active democracy that allows for the equality of all of our candidates. For example, our IEC partnered with large social media companies in order to reduce the spread of incorrect information in the run up to our election. Continually, South Africa values international institutions and believes them to be important however we also place an emphasis on the lack of African representation within these institutions, for example the Security Council. Furthermore, we have a very strong view on nuclear disarmament being the best way forward for our country in order to prevent unnecessary harm that could rip open the international relationships and institutions that our country prides itself in developing and maintaining. Nuclear disarmament must be the way forward for a modernised and well developed future that will benefit not only the citizens in our country but in all countries that are gathered here today. The need for nuclear disarmament is ever increasing and will only change with the support of others within the UN. The Republic of South Africa's view of modern warfare is that there should be further updates to current treaties in place such as the Geneva convention. There should be specific clauses on cyber, space and biological warfare which should be updated regularly to keep up with the ever advancing post truth world. These are the views of the Republic of South Africa.

## [GA1]

The Republic of South Africa has very strong opinions on nuclear disarmament. There is a strong belief of nuclear disarmament not only on a national level but an international level. This can be seen through the number of treaties signed by South Africa, specifically the treaty on the prohibition of nuclear weapons, the main outline of this treaty was to move towards the total disarmament of nuclear weapons and to declare not to make further weapons. Furthermore, the signing of the Treaty on the Non-proliferation of nuclear weapons (NPT) in 1991 shows South Africa's constant call for disarmament. South Africa itself has completely disarmed all nuclear weapons prior to signing the NPT voluntarily. There was more advocacy for nuclear disarmament by the leadership role that South Africa played within the African Nuclear Weapons Free Zone Treaty (Treaty of Pelindaba). This shows the clear position of the Republic of South Africa on the topic of nuclear weapons. The Republic of South Africa would argue that a European nuclear weapons

umbrella would go against the treaties signed by countries such as the United Kingdom and France. There is a belief that this would add to further undermining of the disarmament of weapons and not be true to the treaties signed by countries. The views of modern warfare and its use is that the Republic of South Africa is often vulnerable to asymmetrical cyber and biological warfare, and although being apart of the UN is often not involved in forums to talk on the issue. South Africa's view is that there should be a change in the way that modern warfare should be verified although in the post truth era it is aware that this is hard. The post truth era allows for emotions to take more influence over issues rather than rational thinking. South Africa has been a long-term member of the Biological Weapons convention showing its opinion the matter to align more with the west. South Africa acknowledges the need for constant change of modern warfare laws and limitations to prevent violent actions. This could be achieved by specific clauses on cyber, space and biological warfare which should be updated regularly to keep up with the ever advancing post truth world. Furthermore, this could mean a change or update to the Geneva convention as modern warfare is still rather unknown and has a large humanitarian impact when used in the wrong way. This is the views of The Republic of South Africa.

### [GA6]

In South Africa, we believe that in the post-truth era, dis and misinformation threatens to undermine democracy and distort electoral outcomes and that social media is at the forefront of these issues. Social media has amplified the reach and impact of such information as it has the ability to go national and across borders easily and quickly. Strategies for combatting such information can include enhanced detection and fact-checking, user education, and policy framework. For South Africa specifically, we emphasise local language support, providing fact-checking in the official languages so that it has enhanced effectiveness. Furthermore, utilising community engagement by leveraging communities and influences to amplify correct information and also addressing digital inequalities so that access to reliable information is inclusive and reaches those most vulnerable to disinformation campaigns. For example, South Africa's Independent Electoral Commission (IEC) partnered with big social media companies, including TikTok, Meta, and Google, and the non-profit organisation Media Monitoring Africa (MMA) during the election time to creating working groups combating incorrect information and to support awareness campaigns. In terms of addressing the erosion of trust in international institutions, multilateralism is rooted within South Africa's foreign policy and we hold the belief that international solidarity is very important. We are members of a range of different international institutions, for example the African Union (AU), the Commonwealth, and we are also a BRICS country. Despite this, we do believe that some institutions require reforms in order to make them more fair. South Africa hold the view that the Security Council is no longer fit for purpose as it fails to consider diverse view points and does not represent all countries. However, having permanent African representation on the council would help this injustice.

### [ECOSOC]

South Africa emphasises the importance of environmental stability as it is key to our national unity due to the vulnerable nature of our own country. South Africa is a

country deeply affected by climate issues with us having an extensive coastline and very extreme seasons. Therefore, we see it as being vital to commit to net zero targets with us targeting 2050 and some of our allies having similar targets like 2060 being their target. With us being geographically vulnerable to environmental concerns through cyclones and extreme droughts we have committed to net zero by 2050 and we introduced the carbon tax act in order to combat the existential threat that poses weaker countries like ours and the whole world through climate change. In terms of making progress for helping climate change the post truth era is fundamental to helping national awareness as disinformation surrounding climate change can cause a mistrust in the institutions in our country that are trying to help our climate. In terms of global crises we are currently reviewing our response to the covid pandemic through the national respiratory pathogen pandemic preparedness plan which aims to improve our already strong response towards areas of global crises such as covid. Our covid response was impressive likely due to our former experiences with disease outbreaks through the 2017 listerous outbreak which took over 200 lives and prepared us for the impact that covid had globally. However, we can still learn from our allies in the BRICS around how to prepare for a global crisis. Our allies such as China had a very comprehensive response with them using an early lockdown that started in 23rd of January and through their declaration of a state of national emergency and their zero covid policy they managed to eliminate the virus in what is widely seen as being the best international response to the outbreak. In South Africa we are learning from the BRICS countries responses and we have created more integrated data systems with centralised surveillance systems which can track areas with outbreaks and areas with limited vaccines to amend these issues.

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