

# 2020 Review Conference of the Parties to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons

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## Main Committee I

### Summary record of the 4th meeting

Held at Headquarters, New York, on Friday, 12 August 2022, at 10 a.m.

*Chair:* Mr. Aidid ..... (Malaysia)

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*The meeting was called to order at 10.05 a.m.*

### **Focused exchange of views on negative security assurances**

1. **Mr. Ogasawara** (Japan) said that Japan provided basic support to negative security assurances. When Japan had signed the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons, it had underscored that the nuclear-weapon States must not have recourse to the use of nuclear weapons or threaten to use such weapons against non-nuclear-weapon States. That statement still underpinned his country's position. There had been achievements in relation to negative security assurances, including actions 7 and 8 of the action plan contained in the Final Document of the 2010 Review Conference of the Parties to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons and the joint statement of the leaders of the five nuclear-weapon States on preventing nuclear war and avoiding arms races. However, the speech given by President Putin on 24 February 2022 on Russian nuclear force in the context of the aggression against Ukraine had drastically eroded the value of such vital multilateral documents and had squarely contradicted the joint statement. The heightening of the alert level of the Russian nuclear deterrence units was a dangerous act that might further destabilize the situation. Japan condemned those words and actions of the Russian Federation, which also ran counter to the 1994 Memorandum on Security Assurances in Connection with Ukraine's Accession to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (Budapest Memorandum). Japan urged the Russian Federation to honour its commitments and obligation in relation to security assurances, including those concerning nuclear weapons. As the only country to have suffered atomic bombings during war, his country was fully aware of their catastrophic humanitarian consequences. Such tragedy must never be repeated.

2. **Mr. Gómez Robledo Verduzco** (Mexico) said that his delegation had taken careful note of the positions expressed by the nuclear-weapon States on negative security assurances in the meeting held the previous day in subsidiary body 1. He wondered why some of them had stated that the preconditions for negotiations on a legally binding agreement on the subject had not been met. It was unclear whether the Protocol to the Treaty on the Southeast Asia Nuclear Weapon-Free Zone (Treaty of Bangkok) not yet having entered into force was a fundamental impediment to the conclusion of a legally binding agreement on negative security assurances. That negative security assurances had been included in Security Council resolutions was important

because it made them obligatory. Nonetheless, they should not be unilateral in nature.

3. An exchange of opinions on the appropriate forum for a deeper discussion of the topic could be useful. His delegation had lost all hope that the Conference on Disarmament would overcome its lethargy and make any further progress. Fortunately, however, on a significant number of occasions in recent years, the General Assembly had been able to react and respond to the lack of direction of the Conference. He would welcome further interactive discussion on the interesting proposal made the previous day by Kuwait on establishing a working group on negative security assurances.

4. **Mr. Göbel** (Germany) said that the current Review Conference should recognize that reaffirming and strengthening negative security assurances would improve the overall security environment and build confidence in the non-proliferation regime. The current Review Conference should encourage the nuclear-weapon States to tighten those assurances, including in the context of treaties on nuclear-weapon-free zones. All States should support such treaties, including for creating a zone free of nuclear weapons and other weapons of mass destruction in the Middle East. Germany was encouraged by the sessions of the Conference on the Establishment of a Middle East Zone Free of Nuclear Weapons and Other Weapons of Mass Destruction that been held on that subject to date.

5. He hoped that language relating to negative security assurances contained in the documents entitled "Stepping stones for advancing nuclear disarmament" (NPT/CONF.2020/WP.6) and "Recommendations for consideration by the tenth Review Conference of the Parties to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons" (NPT/CONF.2020/WP.10), submitted by the States members of the Stockholm Initiative for Nuclear Disarmament and the Non-Proliferation and Disarmament Initiative, respectively, could be incorporated into the draft report of the Committee.

6. He reiterated his country's great concern that Russia, with its war of aggression against Ukraine, had broken the negative security assurances that it had given under the Budapest Memorandum.

7. **Mr. Ding Tongbing** (China) said that negative security assurances were an important issue in the context of the Non-Proliferation Treaty. Non-nuclear-weapon States bore the obligation of not developing and not obtaining nuclear weapons, and ought to enjoy the right not to be subjected to the threat posed by such weapons. Security assurances provided by the nuclear-weapon States to non-nuclear-weapon States lowered

the motivation to obtain nuclear weapons, prevented their proliferation and reduced the risk of their use, thus advancing the disarmament process. The position of China on the issue comprised the following main points.

8. First, all nuclear-weapon States should abandon nuclear deterrence policies based on first use of nuclear weapons and unequivocally commit not to be the first to use nuclear weapons at any time and under any circumstance, and unconditionally undertake not to use or threaten to use nuclear weapons against non-nuclear-weapon States or nuclear-weapon-free zones. That was the most effective way to solve the issue of security assurances and was also the most realistic, practical and meaningful measure of nuclear disarmament. Second, the nuclear-weapon States should diminish the role of nuclear weapons in national security doctrines, not designate any country as a target for nuclear attack, and not aim the nuclear weapons they controlled at any country. Third, the nuclear-weapon States should provide legally binding negative security assurances to non-nuclear-weapon States. The Conference on Disarmament should begin substantive work as soon as possible on an international legal instrument regarding negative security assurances for non-nuclear-weapon States. His delegation supported the position of the delegation of Mexico: the time was ripe for negative security assurances, which had a solid basis of international discussion, and the relevant countries should not obstruct the negotiations under any pretext. Fourth, the nuclear-weapon States should support the relevant countries and regions in their efforts to establish, according to their actual circumstances and on the basis of voluntary negotiation and agreement, nuclear-weapon-free zones or zones free of weapons of mass destruction, and take on the corresponding responsibilities in a legally binding form.

9. China unequivocally committed not to be the first to use nuclear weapons at any time and under any circumstances, and unconditionally undertook not to use or threaten to use nuclear weapons against non-nuclear-weapon States or nuclear-weapon-free-zones. That policy had never changed, and never would. China supported the Conference on Disarmament in beginning, at an early date, substantive work on an international legal instrument regarding negative security assurances, and was open to any other recommendations or measures to facilitate progress on the issue of security assurances. China had already signed and ratified the relevant protocols to all treaties on nuclear-weapon-free zones in Latin America, the Asia-Pacific, Africa and Central Asia, respected the non-nuclear-weapon status of Mongolia, and was willing to sign the Treaty of Bangkok at an early date. China would continue

working tirelessly with all parties in its efforts to arrive at an appropriate solution regarding the issue of negative security assurances.

10. **Ms. Delaroche** (France) said that negative security assurances had acquired greater visibility in recent months in the severely damaged security context stemming from the unprovoked and unjustified armed aggression by Russia against Ukraine, which France condemned in the strongest terms. The Russian violation of the territorial integrity of Ukraine had breached the Budapest Memorandum. Like the United States and the United Kingdom, Russia had been obliged, pursuant to the Memorandum, to respect Ukrainian sovereignty, independence and borders. In return, Ukraine had handed to Russia the nuclear weapons on its territory and had joined the Non-Proliferation Treaty as a non-nuclear-weapon State. The violation by Russia of its international obligations distanced it from what the international community had the right to expect from a nuclear-weapon State, namely responsibility and full respect for international commitments.

11. France respected calls for a legally binding treaty on security assurances but recalled that the security assurances that it had unilaterally given to the States parties to the Treaty were already legally binding and were incompatible with the idea of such a treaty, which in practice could only work if nuclear doctrines were harmonized. The nuclear-weapon States, however, were not homogenous. No treaty could contravene the right to legitimate defence that was enshrined in Article 51 of the Charter of the United Nations, on which the strictly defensive doctrine of her country relied. Interpretative declarations that had been agreed, when the regional protocols were signed, were clear and unequivocal; a legally binding, universal treaty on negative security assurances would not provide any new protection to non-nuclear-weapon States.

12. **Ms. Quintero Correa** (Colombia) said that the final document of the current Review Conference should reaffirm the commitments made at the 1995 Review and Extension Conference and at the 2000 and 2010 Review Conferences, and adopted as steps towards the implementation of the legally binding commitments under the Non-Proliferation Treaty.

13. Progress must be made toward the earliest possible negotiation and adoption of a universal and legally binding instrument on assurances against the use and threat of use of nuclear weapons against non-nuclear-weapon States. Negotiations must also start as soon as possible on a treaty banning the production of fissile material for nuclear weapons or other nuclear explosive devices and for the elimination of such materials.

Recommendations on those topics contained in document [NPT/CONF.2020/WP.7](#), submitted by the States Parties to the Treaty for the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons in Latin America and the Caribbean (Treaty of Tlatelolco), should be included in the final document of the current Review Conference. The stagnancy within the Conference on Disarmament must also be addressed. Overcoming it was not the ultimate goal but doing so would help to achieve the objective of general and complete disarmament.

14. **Mr. Vishnevetskii** (Russian Federation) said that the Budapest Memorandum had first been violated by the current Ukrainian authorities and the countries that had supported or sponsored the coup d'état that had resulted in the effective disintegration of Ukraine. That was where the seeds of the conflict and its current consequences in the country lay. To accuse Russia of violating the Budapest Memorandum was, therefore, contrary to the facts, which told an entirely different story.

15. Nuclear-weapon-free zones were important instruments to strengthen the non-proliferation regime and regional and international security. His country had signed and ratified protocols to treaties on such zones in several regions and had thereby given guarantees against the use or threat of use of nuclear weapons to more than 100 States. Russia supported the formalization of such a zone in Southeast Asia and, along with the other nuclear-weapon States, was opening consultations with States parties to the Treaty of Bangkok, in order that the associated protocol could be signed quickly.

16. His country intended to make the usual reservations stipulating that Russia would not consider itself bound to security assurances if jointly attacked by a State party to the Treaty of Bangkok and a nuclear-weapon State, or if a State party to that Treaty allowed nuclear-weapon vessels and aircraft to use its ports and airports. Such assurances would be limited to the territories of the States parties to the Treaty as defined in the Treaty. Those reservations were entirely logical, did not impact the interests of States that dutifully followed the spirit and the letter of the Treaty, and aligned with reservations that had been made when other treaties had been signed.

17. Recently, the creation of the enhanced trilateral security partnership between Australia, the United Kingdom and the United States (AUKUS) had increased the risk that the infrastructure of nuclear-weapon States could appear in States parties to the South Pacific Nuclear Free Zone Treaty (Treaty of Rarotonga). In such a case, and if the infrastructure was used in any way by

the nuclear-weapon States, the reservation would need to be enforced. In addition, such reservations were useful tools to discourage States from taking part in indirect or opaque nuclear weapons programmes.

18. **Mr. Abd Aziz** (Malaysia) said that negative security assurances were vital to address at the current Review Conference because they had been a key factor in the extension of the Non-Proliferation Treaty in 1995. The commitment by the nuclear-weapon States to negative security assurances remained questionable: some had highlighted the difficulty of providing such assurance in the current challenging international security environment, and other excuses had been made in more peaceful times.

19. Unilateral declarations made by the nuclear-weapon States were inadequate to prevent the use or threat of use of nuclear weapons against non-nuclear-weapon States because they could be withdrawn or changed relatively easily. Non-nuclear-weapon States should be given assurances against the use or threat of use of nuclear weapons that were unlimited in scope, application and duration. Such effective, preventive measures not only strengthened international peace and security but also contributed to the non-proliferation of nuclear weapons, and addressing the issue of negative security assurances should therefore be in the interest of the nuclear-weapons States. The conclusion of an effective, universal, unconditional, non-discriminatory, irrevocable and legally binding instrument on the subject would continue to be a priority until nuclear weapons were totally eliminated.

20. The issue of negative security assurances could be approached practically through existing nuclear-weapon-free zones, which were a positive step towards global nuclear disarmament and non-proliferation. All parties to international instruments concerning security assurances and such zones must fully implement their corresponding obligations and must never subject those obligations to preconditions that were contrary to the objectives or spirit of the instruments. All States parties to the Non-Proliferation Treaty should intensify their efforts to establish nuclear-weapon-free zones in regions where they did not yet exist, particularly the Middle East, and reaffirm the validity of the resolution on the Middle East adopted at the 1995 Review and Extension Conference. The nuclear-weapon States should sign and ratify the Protocol to the Treaty of Bangkok without delay.

21. There must be an emphasis on the catastrophic humanitarian consequences and inherent unacceptable risk of nuclear weapons and a rejection of all nuclear threats. It was necessary to reaffirm that a nuclear war

could not be won and must not be fought, and that nuclear weapons must never be used again. The nuclear-weapon States should be called on to renew their commitment to the implementation of their obligations that had been agreed at previous Review Conferences, particularly to make further efforts to reduce and to eliminate nuclear weapons, and, in the interest of credibility, to provide clear, unqualified timelines or benchmarks.

22. Despite all that had been said at the current Review Conference, his delegation had seen no action reflecting the seriousness with which the nuclear-weapon States had said they took their obligations under article VI of the Non-Proliferation Treaty. There had been little or no real progress, and many obligations and commitments that had been agreed at previous Review Conferences remained unfulfilled. Pending nuclear disarmament, strengthened negative security assurances represented an achievable step towards the commitments that had been made by the nuclear-weapon States pursuant to article VI of the Treaty. The nuclear-weapon States must demonstrate their full commitment to nuclear disarmament to prevent a decline of international confidence in the Treaty regime.

23. **Mr. Yaghoubifar** (Islamic Republic of Iran) said that the nuclear bombings of Hiroshima and Nagasaki by the United States had created a human catastrophe of unprecedented dimensions. Any use or threat of use of nuclear weapons would be contrary to international law and would constitute a crime against humanity. Pending the total elimination of nuclear weapons, the nuclear-weapon States should provide effective, universal, unconditional, non-discriminatory, irrevocable and legally binding assurances not to use or threaten to use nuclear weapons against non-nuclear-weapon States that had renounced the acquisition of nuclear weapons. No real progress had been made since 1945 to meet that reasonable requirement.

24. Some nuclear-weapon States argued that negative security assurances should be granted only in the context of nuclear-weapon-free zones but none of the existing zones had received any unconditional, irrevocable and legally binding assurances. The prospects for the creation of new zones were unclear, owing to the persistent refusal by the Israeli regime to accede to the Non-Proliferation Treaty as a non-nuclear-weapon State. Unilateral declarations by the nuclear-weapon States regarding security assurances were limited, ambiguous, conditional and could even justify the use of nuclear weapons.

25. Some nuclear-weapon States and the North Atlantic Treaty Organization described in their

strategies and policies the circumstances under which they would use nuclear weapons against non-nuclear-weapon States and the United States had raised the risk of that scenario occurring by developing low-yield nuclear warheads. Given that such risks had not been higher since the end of the cold war, the issue of negative security assurances towards non-nuclear-weapon States parties to the Treaty had taken on a new importance.

26. He proposed that the current Review Conference adopt a decision on negative security assurances to non-nuclear-weapon States. It should state that the total elimination of nuclear weapons was the only absolute guarantee against the use or threat of use of nuclear weapons and that, until that goal was achieved, the nuclear-weapon States must adopt measures to assure non-nuclear-weapon States against the use or threat of use of nuclear weapons, in recognition of the fact that such assurances were central to the credibility of the Treaty. It should include a reaffirmation of the right and legitimate interest of all non-nuclear-weapon States parties to receive unequivocal and legally binding security assurances from nuclear-weapon States against the use or threat of use of nuclear weapons, and a call for the Conference on Disarmament to immediately begin negotiations on concluding an internationally legally binding instrument to effectively, unconditionally, non-discriminatorily and irrevocably assure all non-nuclear-weapon States parties to the Treaty against the use or threat of use of nuclear weapons. It should highlight that negative security assurances were an effective means to reduce nuclear risk and conclude that all nuclear-weapon States would undertake, through declarations to be issued no later than 2022, not to use or threaten to use nuclear weapons under any circumstances against any non-nuclear-weapon State party to the Treaty.

27. **Mr. Albai** (Iraq) said that it was widely understood that the only guarantee against the use or threat of use of nuclear weapons was the total elimination of such weapons. Consequently, multilateral efforts should be redoubled and the requisite political will summoned to conclude a legally binding instrument providing security assurances to non-nuclear-weapon States against the use or threat of use of nuclear weapons by the nuclear-weapon States and specifying the mechanisms capable of facilitating progress towards that objective. Actions taken to that end would give States not parties to the Non-Proliferation Treaty an incentive to accede to it.

28. Stressing the need for a multilateral framework for negotiations on disarmament in order to reach an international consensus, his delegation called for the

re-establishment of a subcommittee with a negotiating mandate under the auspices of the Conference on Disarmament in order to draft a legally binding instrument on effective international arrangements to assure non-nuclear-weapon States against the use or threat of use of nuclear weapons.

29. He underscored the threat posed to global security by the growth of nuclear stockpiles, the modernization of nuclear weapons and the increase in military expenditures, against the backdrop of intensifying conflicts and volatility worldwide. While negative security assurances were necessary and an important step towards achieving disarmament, they remained conditional and could neither be considered a substitute for the ultimate aim of full and comprehensive disarmament, nor address the legitimate concerns of non-nuclear-weapon States parties to the Non-Proliferation Treaty. There was therefore an urgent need to provide security assurances to non-nuclear-weapon States, thereby strengthening the nuclear non-proliferation regime and establishing trust between nuclear-weapon and non-nuclear-weapon States. The latter, having renounced possession of nuclear weapons in the hope of achieving complete disarmament in line with article VI of the Treaty, had the right to receive such assurances.

30. **Mr. Gallhofer** (Austria) said that the issues of negative security assurances and of reservations to nuclear-weapon-free zones were important for reasons outlined by other delegations but also because of the devastating blow that had been given to the credibility of security guarantees by the breach of the Budapest Memorandum. The transboundary effects of nuclear detonations should serve to highlight the limits of negative security assurances. Even countries that were not involved in a nuclear conflict would suffer the catastrophic consequences of it and, therefore, negative security assurances could only be an accompanying measure to the urgently needed progress on nuclear disarmament.

31. Humanitarian conferences held in 2013, 2014 and 2022, as well as work done by renowned research institutions, had added important new evidence on the catastrophic, transboundary and potentially global humanitarian consequence of nuclear explosions, and that evidence must be reflected in the final document of the Review Conference.

32. **Mr. Fetz** (Canada) said that negative security assurances could make a positive contribution to international peace and security, and he supported the comments made by the representative of Germany, particularly those on the inclusion in the draft report of

the proposals on negative security assurances contained in documents [NPT/CONF.2020/WP.6](#) and [NPT/CONF.2020/WP.10](#). His delegation also endorsed the comments made by Germany on nuclear-weapon-free zones, including on a nuclear-weapon-free zone in the Middle East.

33. **Ms. Quintero Correa** (Colombia) said that if there were compliance with article VI of the Non-Proliferation Treaty, legally binding instruments on negative security assurances would not be needed. They were needed because the goal of general and complete disarmament under strict international verification had not been achieved. It had been repeatedly said that the conditions were not yet ripe for either the full implementation of article VI or for legally binding agreements on negative security assurances. The conditions must be created. As spelled out in article VIII of the Treaty, the purpose of Review Conferences was to review the operation of the Treaty so as to ensure that its purposes and provisions were being realized. That was what should be discussed and on which progress should be sought.

34. Some States had referred to their specific security concerns and the need to ensure that their security was not diminished. The solution lay in collective security, not the security of only one or a few States, and could be achieved only through the total elimination of nuclear weapons.

35. **Mr. Khaldi** (Algeria) said that, pending the total elimination of nuclear weapons in accordance with article VI of the Non-Proliferation Treaty, it was the legitimate right of non-nuclear weapon States to have credible safeguards to ensure their security, independence, territorial integrity and sovereignty against the use or threat of use of nuclear weapons, provided that those States respected their non-proliferation commitments under articles II and III of the Treaty. Negotiations must, therefore, begin as a priority on credible, universal, unconditional, non-discriminatory, irrevocable and legally binding security assurances for all non-nuclear-weapon States.

36. The negative security assurances granted in the framework of Security Council resolution [984 \(1995\)](#) on security assurances to non-nuclear-weapon States parties to the Non-Proliferation Treaty were not international legal commitments and could be terminated unilaterally. The safeguards contained in protocols to treaties on nuclear-weapon-free zones suffered from shortcomings, and nuclear-weapon-free zones did not cover all the regions of the world. Nuclear deterrence doctrines undermined the system further.

37. The nuclear-weapon States must reaffirm their undertakings in respect of security safeguards for non-nuclear-weapon States. To be effective and credible, negative security assurances should be codified in a legally binding, multilateral agreement banning the use or the threat of use of nuclear weapons against non-nuclear-weapon States. Such an instrument would not threaten the security of any State and would be an effective means to strengthen the Treaty system and to promote its universal nature.

38. **Ms. Almojuela** (Philippines) said that, like most non-nuclear-weapon States, her country had long responded to the dictates of global public conscience by foregoing its sovereign right to acquire nuclear weapons. It had been fulfilling its part of the so-called grand bargain with the nuclear-weapon States on the predication that they were legally, politically, morally and ethically committed to pursuing nuclear disarmament and refraining from the use or threat of use of nuclear weapons. Therefore, the nuclear-weapon States must provide effective, universal, unconditional, non-discriminatory, irrevocable and legally binding security assurances without delay to non-nuclear-weapon States.

39. The global geopolitical environment had recently regressed, including through the upgraded role of nuclear weapons in security doctrines, the opacity among some nuclear-weapon States and the continued risk of instability, which had heightened demands for such States to issue unqualified and unconditional security assurances. The failure of existing security assurances, including the Budapest Memorandum, highlighted the need for legally binding international agreements on negative security assurances.

40. The current Review Conference must recognize that reality and, in its final document note that stronger negative security assurances would enhance the overall security environment and build confidence in the non-proliferation regime. Such assurances were not an end in themselves but were interim steps towards a shared goal of a world without nuclear weapons. Non-nuclear-weapon States had a legitimate interest to receive security assurances that were unequivocal and legally binding.

41. The current Review Conference should reaffirm that military and security policies that allowed the use and threat of use of nuclear weapons contravened existing negative security assurances. It should urge the nuclear-weapon States to refrain from any use or threat of use of nuclear weapons against any State party to the Treaty by completely excluding such actions from their military and security policies.

42. The final document should also include a call for the establishment of a subsidiary body on security assurances. The proposal, by the Group of Non-Aligned States Parties to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons, for a process to consider further work on negative security assurances echoed similar proposals for processes for the focused discussion of key issues that had gained much more salience to the Non-Proliferation Treaty and its credibility in recent years. The Philippines also supported structured discussions on nuclear risk reduction and transparency.

43. The forward-looking final document must include a description of pathways for more substantive discussions and dialogue that would result in tangible progress towards nuclear disarmament. The discussions should provide common reference points, build trust and contribute to the reaffirmation of the role of the Treaty in the preservation and promotion of international peace and security by ensuring that the Treaty community was able to continue its work amid present and future dynamically evolving geopolitical environments. Meaningful progress in such discussions was contingent on concrete advances in the implementation by the nuclear-weapon States of their nuclear disarmament commitments.

44. **Mr. Jebb** (Australia) said that the Treaty of Rarotonga had served the interests of the region very well over many years and Australia was very proud to have played an integral role in its creation. That Treaty had provided negative security assurances to its States parties and broader assurances on non-proliferation and disarmament to States within and outside the zone.

45. His country remained steadfast in its commitment to the Treaty of Rarotonga, which was not affected by Australian plans to acquire nuclear-powered submarines. The Treaty of Rarotonga, like the Non-Proliferation Treaty, did not prohibit nuclear propulsion and his Government would ensure that its actions, especially in relation to the management of nuclear material, were consistent with its non-proliferation commitments. Australia did not and would not seek nuclear weapons and his delegation strongly rejected any such inference by Russia through its references to nuclear infrastructure. Australia would not undertake any enrichment, reprocessing or fuel fabrication in connection with the nuclear-powered submarine programme. He did not consider naval nuclear propulsion to be a matter for the Committee.

46. **Mr. Kanimba** (United Kingdom) said that the invasion of Ukraine by Russia was a violation of the security assurances that Russia had given to Ukraine in 1994 in the Budapest Memorandum. Russia must



immediately cease its irresponsible and dangerous nuclear rhetoric and behaviour, uphold its international commitments and recommit in words and deeds to the principles enshrined in the recent joint statement by the leaders of the five nuclear-weapon States.

47. In its final document, the current Review Conference should note the reaffirmation by the Russian Federation, the United Kingdom and the United States of their obligations under the Budapest Memorandum and it should urge all States to uphold their international obligations in that regard. The final document should also include a recognition of the reaffirmation by the nuclear-weapon-States of their existing security assurances and of the security assurances that were available under treaties on nuclear-weapon-free zones. The current Review Conference should also urge the nuclear-weapon States to continue to work on safeguarding the security of non-nuclear-weapon States that were not in material breach of the non-proliferation obligations under the Non-Proliferation Treaty.

48. **Mr. Pieris** (Sri Lanka) said that neither Preparatory Committee meetings nor previous Review Conferences had made progress on making negative security assurances legally binding. The demand for security assurances had been raised by the non-nuclear-weapon States in the 1960s as the negotiations on the Non-Proliferation Treaty were concluding. The response from the nuclear-weapon States had been partial and conditional, however, and had not changed very much since.

49. Efforts to conclude a universal and legally binding instrument on negative security assurances to non-nuclear-weapon States should, therefore, be vigorously pursued. Such an instrument would be an important step towards the achievement of arms control, nuclear disarmament and nuclear non-proliferation. He hoped that recommendations 40 to 46 contained in document [NPT/CONF.2020/WP.26](#) would be reflected in the final document.

50. **Mr. Damico** (Brazil) said that non-nuclear-weapon States had been shouldering heavy responsibilities under the Non-Proliferation Treaty and had been promoting the objectives and purposes of the Treaty within their means. Nuclear-weapon-free zones were the most important means to bolster the security of non-nuclear-weapon States, pending total and complete disarmament, and they added considerable value to the achievement of peace and stability. Indeed, they had been such a useful concept that States in the Middle East had repeated their calls for a zone free of weapons of mass destruction in their region. Nevertheless, their added value was diminished by the qualifications and

reservations that their members added to negative security assurances. Assurances that were unconditional, irrevocable and non-discriminatory were a very useful instrument to balance out the rights and obligations of the nuclear-weapon States and non-nuclear-weapon States and to provide security to the latter States pending total and complete disarmament.

51. Undeniably, however, doubts were growing over the usefulness of negative security assurances. To revive their full potential, rapid progress was needed on a legally binding, universal, unconditional and multilateral instrument. It was the least controversial move and implied the fewest changes in nuclear doctrines. Enhanced negative security assurances would have considerable impact on the level of security that non-nuclear-weapon States enjoyed.

52. Although there was widespread support for nuclear-weapon-free zones, there was a distinct resistance to the withdrawal of reservations and similar qualifications to negative security assurances. Ultimately, the nuclear-weapon States were disinclined to surrender a modicum of their security to enhance the security of nuclear-weapon-free zone members. The basic texts on disarmament included the principle of undiminished security for all, but such qualifications stood in the way of progress. Even on a subject of marginal importance to the security of the nuclear-weapon States, the situation was dire.

53. **Ms. Porta** (Argentina) said that the total elimination of nuclear weapons was the only absolute guarantee against their use or threat of use; until that goal was reached, effective, international, negative security assurances that were designed to protect the security interests of all States must be developed. They built trust between the non-nuclear-weapon States and the nuclear-weapon States and incentivized the latter to reduce their dependence on nuclear weapons.

54. Although some security assurances were legally binding, the existing system did not fully satisfy the needs of non-nuclear-weapon States because the assurances were incomplete, ambiguous, conditional and geographically limited and they lacked an implementation mechanism. Argentina welcomed unilateral guarantees and policies of no first use, but they were not enough to provide the necessary trust between the nuclear-weapon States and non-nuclear-weapon States. A universal, unconditional, irrevocable and legally binding instrument on negative security assurances must be reached as soon as possible. It should be clear, credible, unequivocal and



non-discriminatory and should address the concerns of all parties.

55. **Mr. Gómez Robledo Verduzco** (Mexico) said that the topic of interpretative declarations and reservations to treaties on nuclear-weapon-free zones had been somewhat generalized. The nuclear-weapon States referred almost without exception to reservations on the commitment not to use nuclear weapons in the event of armed aggression by a country in concert with or with the support of another nuclear Power, and to their legitimate right to defence. Many interpretative declarations concerned other reservations, including the transportation of nuclear weapons in a treaty's zone of application, which was particularly relevant to the nuclear Powers that had de jure or de facto jurisdiction over territory in that zone, or the recognition of territorial or maritime borders.

56. A real dialogue between the States that had made such reservations and the other parties to the treaties was missing, despite the fact it had been requested on a number of occasions. A first step might be for the Secretary-General of the United Nations to issue a report that listed all the interpretative declarations in all the nuclear-weapon-free zones in order to have an informed discussion. The interpretative declarations were wide-ranging and, in some cases, it was necessary to consider whether they were reservations in name only. It was not an easy discussion and should not be viewed as an attempt by non-nuclear-weapon States to eliminate all reservations and interpretative declarations.

57. He did not understand why States that had tried not to base their security on nuclear weapons, such as through nuclear-weapon-free zones, the Non-Proliferation Treaty and the Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons, had not received sufficient assurances in return. The assurances that had been given were unilateral in nature and their recipients were at the mercy of their unilateral revocation at any time, as had happened with the Budapest Memorandum. The call for a multilateral treaty or a legally binding instrument was not simply a piece of rhetoric.

58. Discussions in the Conference on Disarmament had stalled and, therefore, it was very pleasing that the representative of France had recognized the new visibility that negative security assurances had acquired. The subject must be given purpose and continuity so that the Conference on Disarmament would permit its discussion. The current Review Conference could give the topic direction and the ability to develop into something that was more ambitious than that which currently existed.

59. **Mr. Ding Tongbing** (China) said that it was clear from the preceding interventions by delegations that the majority of countries acknowledged that negative security assurances were an effective measure, particularly for diminishing the role of nuclear weapons in national security policies. In that regard, the nuclear-weapon States held the primary responsibility. Non-nuclear-weapon States, particularly those aligned with nuclear-weapon States, could also play a positive role. For example, they could persuade those nuclear-weapon States to reduce the role of such weapons in their national security policies and could also reduce the role of the weapons in their own national security policies, and not seek to strengthen nuclear alliances or proliferate or expand nuclear sharing.

*The meeting rose at 11.40 a.m.*