

# 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 1st meeting

Held at Headquarters, New York, on Thursday, 4 August 2022, at 3 p.m.

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

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*The meeting was called to order at 3.05 p.m.*

### Organization of work

1. **The Chair** drew attention to the draft programme of work and draft indicative timetable for Main Committee I and its subsidiary body, contained in documents [NPT/CONF.2020/MC.I/INF.1](#) and [NPT/CONF.2020/MC.I/INF.2](#), respectively. Main Committee I had the task of dealing with agenda items 16 and 17 ([NPT/CONF.2020/1](#)).

2. *The programme of work was adopted.*

### General exchange of views

3. **Mr. Nasir** (Indonesia), speaking on behalf of the Group of Non-Aligned States Parties to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons, said that the Group reaffirmed the importance of the stipulation of the International Court of Justice in its 1996 Advisory Opinion on the Legality of the Threat or Use of Nuclear Weapons that there existed an obligation to pursue in good faith and to conclude negotiations leading to nuclear disarmament. The Group called on the nuclear-weapon States to fulfil their multilateral legal obligations on nuclear disarmament and to implement the unequivocal undertaking, set out in the Final Document of the 2000 Review Conference ([NPT/CONF.2000/28](#)) of the Parties to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons and reiterated in 2010, to accomplish the total elimination of their nuclear arsenals leading to nuclear disarmament. The Group also called for the full implementation of the 13 practical steps for systematic and progressive efforts to implement article VI of the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons agreed at the 2000 Review Conference, as well as for the immediate and unconditional cessation of all nuclear weapon tests and complete prohibition of nuclear weapons research and development, pending the entry into force of the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty.

4. The use or threat of use of nuclear weapons would be a crime against humanity, and even the mere possession of nuclear weapons was inconsistent with international humanitarian law. The Group welcomed multilateral efforts towards nuclear disarmament and the total elimination of nuclear weapons and took note of the adoption and entry into force of the Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons in 2017 and 2021 respectively and the successful convening in 2022 of the first meeting of States parties to it. It was hoped that the Treaty would contribute to furthering the objective of the total elimination of nuclear weapons.

5. Having submitted working papers for consideration by the 2020 Review Conference, including one on substantive recommendations ([NPT/CONF.2020/WP.26](#)), the Group proposed that the Conference reiterate a series of principles and objectives, emphasizing that the Non-Proliferation Treaty was the key international instrument for achieving nuclear disarmament, halting proliferation, and promoting international cooperation and assistance in support of the inalienable right of its States parties to use nuclear energy for peaceful purposes. The Group had also put forward specific recommendations on nuclear disarmament, nuclear testing and negative security assurances.

6. **Mr. Hmoud** (Jordan), speaking on behalf of the Group of Arab States, said that the legitimacy of nuclear non-proliferation hinged on the vital pillar of nuclear disarmament. The annual commemoration by the United Nations of the International Day for the Total Elimination of Nuclear Weapons helped to maintain that objective on the international agenda; progress towards that objective, a legal obligation of States parties under article VI of the Non-Proliferation Treaty, must be made through practical, verifiable measures as soon as possible. Despite the political circumstances prevailing at the time, the agreement reached by the parties negotiating the Treaty required the nuclear-weapon States to eliminate their nuclear arsenals and other States to refrain from attempting to acquire such weapons.

7. Alarming, attempts by certain nuclear-weapon States to reinterpret and place conditions on the implementation of their article VI obligations diluted those obligations and thereby undermined the Treaty. Possession of nuclear weapons by the five nuclear-weapon States was a temporary arrangement, not an entitlement or a permanent state of affairs. Of equal concern was those States' failure to uphold their commitments undertaken at the 2000 and 2010 Review Conferences, in particular, decision 2 adopted at the 1995 Review and Extension Conference of the Parties to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons, the 13 steps adopted at the 2000 Review Conference, and the detailed measures set forth in the Final Document of the 2010 Review Conference.

8. The five nuclear-weapon States continued to resist specifying a time frame for the implementation of their nuclear disarmament obligations. The continued adoption by those States of military and security doctrines providing for expanded use of nuclear weapons and the modernization of nuclear arsenals violated the letter and spirit of the Non-Proliferation Treaty and contradicted the declarations made by those

States concerning the provision of positive and negative security assurances to non-nuclear-weapon States parties to the Treaty, pursuant to Security Council resolutions [255 \(1968\)](#) and [894 \(1995\)](#). The Arab Group therefore called for the adoption of a legally binding international instrument granting non-nuclear-weapon States unconditional security assurances against the use or threat of use of nuclear weapons. Moreover, mechanisms should be established through which tangible progress towards achieving the total elimination of nuclear weapons could be made.

9. Owing to the failure of States parties to adopt a final document by consensus at the 2015 Review Conference and the continued failure of the five nuclear-weapon States to fulfil their obligations, efforts to strengthen compliance with the Non-Proliferation Treaty, fulfil the obligations undertaken at previous Review Conferences and achieve nuclear disarmament within a clearly specified and agreed time frame must be redoubled.

10. The Arab Group stressed the need to accord equal importance to each of the three pillars of the Treaty and to redress the imbalance of recent years, with certain States parties focusing on non-proliferation at the expense of nuclear disarmament. The negotiation and entry into force of the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons, a non-discriminatory instrument, had been the consequence of global concern about unfulfilled nuclear disarmament obligations set forth in the Non-Proliferation Treaty. There was a need to negotiate a nuclear disarmament treaty with a specific time frame for the elimination of nuclear weapons, as part of an effective international verification and monitoring regime.

11. The Arab Group hoped that the Conference on Disarmament would overcome its impasse and put in place a comprehensive and balanced programme of work facilitating the negotiation of a non-discriminatory, multilateral and internationally and effectively verifiable treaty banning the production of fissile material for nuclear weapons or other nuclear explosive devices, as called for in the report of the Special Coordinator ([CD/1299](#)) and the Final Documents of the 2000 and 2010 Review Conferences.

12. **Mr. Mahmoud** (Egypt), speaking on behalf of New Agenda Coalition, said that in the seven years since the previous Review Conference, at which States had failed to reach an agreed outcome, the international security environment had seen further marked deterioration. No progress had been made in eliminating nuclear weapons, while their salience had been increasing for some State parties. To reinforce the

credibility of the Non-Proliferation Treaty and its review process, the Coalition called on the nuclear-weapon States to make progress towards full implementation of article VI of the Treaty and reiterate their unequivocal undertaking to eliminate their nuclear arsenals.

13. Continued delay by the nuclear-weapon States in implementing their obligation to disarm was unacceptable. Their regrettable failure to take concrete action to eliminate their nuclear arsenals added to the challenging environment for the current Review Conference, including through threats of use and heightened levels of alertness. The nuclear-weapon States must reaffirm their existing obligations and commitments as a starting point for further progress. The demise of core agreements, such as the Treaty between the United States of America and the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics on the Elimination of Their Intermediate-Range and Shorter-Range Missiles (Intermediate-Range Nuclear Forces Treaty) and the Treaty on Open Skies, and the adoption of national plans to expand, modernize and qualitatively improve nuclear arsenals and maintain or increase the role of nuclear weapons in security doctrines were inconsistent with the commitment of nuclear-weapon States to nuclear disarmament. The threat of a new nuclear arms race had become a stark reality since the 2015 Review Conference. That pernicious trend must be reversed.

14. Although the Coalition was encouraged by the extension of the Treaty between the United States of America and the Russian Federation on Measures for the Further Reduction and Limitation of Strategic Offensive Arms (New START Treaty) and the resumption of efforts by the United States and Russia to advance their bilateral strategic arms control dialogue, it was deeply concerned that such efforts had stalled. Concrete, irreversible and verifiable results were urgently needed and should inspire the nuclear-weapon States' broader multilateral engagement on nuclear disarmament. Any use of nuclear weapons would have catastrophic humanitarian consequences that transcended national borders, posed grave implications for human survival and well-being, and were incompatible with respect for the right to life. The current Review Conference should, at the very least, reiterate its deep concern at that prospect. It should also reaffirm the need for all States to comply with applicable international law, including international humanitarian law. No State or international organization had the capacity to address the devastating consequences of nuclear weapons use, as revealed at the conferences on the humanitarian impact of nuclear weapons, including the most recent, held in Vienna in June 2022.

15. A disparity persisted between the treatment of biological and chemical weapons on the one hand, and nuclear weapons on the other. Although commitments had been made regarding nuclear disarmament and there was growing awareness of the consequences of inaction to curb that category of weapon of mass destruction, the absence of good-faith negotiations on effective measures for nuclear disarmament among States parties to the Non-Proliferation Treaty that were relying on nuclear weapons for their security continued to be a dangerous omission that held back full implementation of the Treaty.

16. The entry into force in January 2021 of the Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons and the first meeting of States Parties to that Treaty in June 2022 offered some much-needed impetus to the nuclear disarmament and non-proliferation regime. That Treaty was consistent with the Non-Proliferation Treaty, complementing and advancing the implementation of article VI while reiterating its urgency, and embodied a long-standing demand for the elimination of nuclear weapons.

17. The New Agenda Coalition supported urgent proposals to reduce nuclear risk. However, such measures needed to be seen as means to an overarching end, which must be nuclear disarmament. Risk reduction efforts must be recognized as interim solutions; the total elimination of nuclear weapons was the only guarantee against their use or threat of use. Without a direct link to the ultimate goal of a nuclear-weapon-free world, nuclear risk reduction measures at best sustained the illusion that humans could live with nuclear weapons indefinitely. While nuclear weapons continued to exist, they would always pose a risk to humanity. All States parties were urged to accelerate implementation of all agreements and undertakings made at successive Review Conferences. The nuclear-weapon States bore special responsibility to fulfil the obligations under article VI. States were invited to consider the suggestions put forward in the Coalition's working paper ([NPT/CONF.2020/PC.III/WP.35](#)).

18. The Coalition had consistently called for and proposed measures to accelerate the implementation of States parties' nuclear disarmament obligations and commitments, including de-alerting; the entry into force of the Comprehensive Nuclear Test Ban Treaty; the conclusion of a fissile material cut-off treaty; the creation of new nuclear-weapon-free zones, particularly in the Middle East; the entry into force of the legally-binding protocols to existing zone treaties and review of any related reservations; transparency; and nuclear disarmament verification.

19. **Ms. Van Deelen** (Representative of the European Union, in its capacity as observer), speaking also on behalf of the candidate countries Albania, Montenegro, North Macedonia, the Republic of Moldova and Ukraine; the stabilization and association process country Bosnia and Herzegovina; and, in addition, Georgia, Monaco and San Marino, said that the European Union would continue to promote comprehensive, balanced and substantive implementation of the action plan in the Final Document of the 2010 Review Conference. Concrete progress towards full implementation of article VI was needed, especially through the overall reduction in the global stockpile of nuclear weapons, taking into account the special responsibility of the States possessing the largest nuclear arsenals.

20. In that regard, the European Union welcomed the agreement reached between the United States and the Russian Federation to extend the New START Treaty for an additional five years. The reduction of deployed strategic nuclear arsenals under that Treaty, enhanced notably by its robust verification mechanism, contributed to the implementation of article VI through the overall reduction in the global stockpile of deployed nuclear weapons. The two nuclear-weapon States with the largest arsenals held a special responsibility for nuclear disarmament and arms control, and were encouraged to further reduce their arsenals, including strategic and non-strategic and deployed and non-deployed nuclear weapons, and to pursue further discussions on confidence-building, transparency, risk reduction and verification activities. The European Union called on China to actively contribute to those processes.

21. Despite the launch of a strategic dialogue between the two nuclear-weapon States possessing the largest arsenals in 2021, nuclear non-proliferation and disarmament had significantly deteriorated in early 2022 following Russian aggression against Ukraine. The European Union strongly condemned the threats made by President Putin to use nuclear force in that war, which were provocative, dangerous, escalatory and unacceptable. In their January 2022 joint statement, the leaders of all five nuclear-weapon States had committed to preventing nuclear war and avoiding arms races and had reaffirmed that a nuclear war could not be won and must never be fought. The threatening statements of Russia and its raising of nuclear alert levels undermined the credibility of its commitment to that declaration. President Putin was manufacturing threats that did not exist in order to justify his further aggression. Russia should immediately de-alert its nuclear forces. That country had blatantly violated its commitments to

refrain from the threat of use of force against the territorial integrity or sovereignty of Ukraine under the 1994 Memorandum on Security Assurances in Connection with Ukraine's Accession to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (Budapest Memorandum). Ukraine had acceded to the Non-Proliferation Treaty as a non-nuclear-weapon State in 1994, having returned Soviet-era nuclear weapons and having received security guarantees, and was in full compliance with its obligations under that Treaty. The loss of credibility of a nuclear-weapon State that was not respecting its security assurances threatened to undermine the Treaty and the disarmament and non-proliferation architecture. The change in the non-nuclear status of Belarus was another worrying development which added to unacceptable attempts to redefine the rules-based European security architecture.

22. Arms control, disarmament and non-proliferation processes needed to be preserved and further advanced. In that regard, the European Union acknowledged the efforts of France to demonstrate increased transparency on its doctrines and the nuclear weapons it possessed. The European Union recalled action 5 of the 2010 Review Conference action plan, calling upon the nuclear-weapon States to enhance transparency and increase mutual confidence.

23. The European Union was committed to advancing nuclear disarmament, in accordance with article VI, especially through the overall reduction in the global stockpile of nuclear weapons. It also supported intensified dialogue, including on strategic stability, increased transparency and confidence-building measures by the nuclear-weapon States to promote further progress in disarmament; recognized the benefits of concrete work on strategic and nuclear risk reduction; emphasized the value of multilateral cooperation in advancing nuclear disarmament verification while encouraging more States to actively engage; and called for the immediate start and early conclusion of negotiations on a fissile material cut-off treaty in the Conference on Disarmament. Pending the entry into force of such a treaty, the European Union called on all States concerned to declare and uphold an immediate moratorium on the production of fissile material for nuclear weapons or other nuclear devices.

24. Her delegation called on all States that had not yet done so, in particular those listed in Annex 2 of the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty, to sign and ratify that Treaty without any preconditions or delay. Pending the entry into force of that Treaty, her delegation also called on all States to abide by the moratorium on nuclear weapon test explosions or any nuclear explosion and to refrain from conducting any

action contrary to its object and purpose. The European Union continued to provide significant support for the monitoring and verification capabilities of the Preparatory Commission for the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty Organization, and had provided nearly 30 million euros in voluntary contributions since 2006.

25. There was a need to renew multilateral efforts and revitalize multilateral negotiating bodies, in particular the Conference on Disarmament. Her delegation recognized the legitimate interest of non-nuclear-weapon States in receiving unequivocal security assurances from the nuclear-weapon States as part of binding and agreed security arrangements. Negative security assurances could be an important confidence-building measure that strengthened the nuclear non-proliferation regime, contributed to nuclear disarmament and enhanced regional and global security, in line with the goals and objectives of the Non-Proliferation Treaty. The European Union supported disarmament and non-proliferation education, and the European Union Non-Proliferation and Disarmament Consortium was contributing in that context with various educational activities.

26. **Mr. Gómez Robledo Verduzco** (Mexico) said that the non-proliferation and disarmament regime relied on the balanced application of its three pillars, and therefore compliance with nuclear disarmament obligations could not continue to be postponed. The existence of 13,000 nuclear weapons, many of which were on high alert status, was unacceptable, violated the obligations assumed by the five nuclear-weapon States and was morally unjustifiable. Arsenals were growing in size, modernity and value in the defence policies of the nuclear-weapon States and their allies, and the nuclear umbrella encompassed more and more countries. Arguments justifying the existence and possession of nuclear weapons continued to emerge, trivializing their use by claiming that their effects could be "limited".

27. The acts of aggression perpetrated by the Russian Federation against Ukraine had given rise to new threats of the use of nuclear weapons, in flagrant violation of the Charter of the United Nations and the negative security assurances stipulated in the Budapest Memorandum. The possibility of a nuclear conflagration was a cause for concern, despite the January 2022 joint statement by the nuclear-weapon States that a nuclear war could not be won and must never be fought.

28. The Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons was complementary to the Non-Proliferation Treaty and was moving towards universality. Mexico would seek to

ensure that the current Review Conference recognized the emergence of that new norm of international law; would make proposals to strengthen the validity and implementation of agreements on negative security assurances for non-nuclear-weapon States; and hoped that, at a minimum, the Conference would reaffirm the validity of the obligations and commitments on nuclear disarmament adopted in 1995, 2000 and 2010.

29. The international context of the current Review Conference highlighted concerns regarding the catastrophic humanitarian consequences of any nuclear detonations, whether intentional or accidental, and the importance of preventing them. Mexico would strive for the Conference to reiterate and strengthen the concern already expressed in that regard during the 2010 Review Conference. Multilateral nuclear disarmament negotiations should be conducted in accordance with the principles of verification, irreversibility and transparency. His delegation commended the possessor States that had submitted national reports and supported progress in nuclear risk reduction through concrete and quantifiable confidence-building measures, provided that those were not conceived as a substitute for nuclear disarmament measures. Mexico called on the five nuclear-weapon States to report on the status of their compliance with the Treaty, and was open to considering the inclusion of nuclear risk reduction measures in the final document of the current Review Conference, with that restriction.

30. His delegation called on Annex 2 States to ratify and accede to the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty in order to achieve its entry into force. For the first time, all the countries of Latin America and the Caribbean were participating in the current Review Conference as States Parties to that Treaty. His delegation believed that the Treaty was being applied provisionally by the States that had ratified it, which was something that should be valued positively. The negotiation of a fissile material cut-off treaty was a measure complementary to the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty that should not continue to be postponed, although reflection on the ideal forum was needed.

31. **Ms. Joyini** (South Africa) said that the work of the Committee would not be easy, given that the sections of the Non-Proliferation Treaty under review included the only article of that instrument that had not seen progress over the previous 50 years, as well as the widening implementation gap between disarmament and non-proliferation obligations. Some States had recently attempted to negate and reinterpret the nuclear disarmament commitments, which continued to polarize the nuclear non-proliferation regime and undermined

the Treaty. The nuclear-weapon States needed to demonstrate political will to implement the action plan of the 2010 Review Conference, set a good example on nuclear disarmament and not seek the lowest common denominator when implementing their obligations.

32. The current Review Conference should urge all States parties to commit to pursuing policies and actions that were fully compatible with the Treaty's object and purpose and should reaffirm the continued validity of the 1995 decision on principles and objectives for nuclear non-proliferation and disarmament; the 13 practical steps agreed to in the Final Document of the 2000 Review Conference; and the conclusions and recommendations for follow-on actions of the 2010 Review Conference. The current Conference should also urge the nuclear-weapon States to accelerate concrete progress on the measures leading to nuclear disarmament through the adoption of specific timelines and benchmarks, halt their modernization programmes, and consider diverting the resources used for those programmes to sustainable development assistance.

33. The object and purpose of the Non-Proliferation Treaty could not be achieved if it was seen only as a means to address the security concerns of some but not all. Beyond the arguments on the security benefits of nuclear weapons, some States also asserted that the international security environment was not conducive to nuclear disarmament. South Africa opposed any conditionality for nuclear disarmament or the reinterpretation of agreed undertakings, obligations and principles, especially the unequivocal undertaking and obligation of the nuclear-weapon States to disarm.

34. Her delegation recommended that the current Review Conference reaffirm the unequivocal undertaking by the nuclear-weapon States towards nuclear disarmament and the principles emanating from the past Review Conferences. The principles of transparency, irreversibility and verifiability should apply to all nuclear disarmament, nuclear arms reduction and arms control measures, with clearly defined timelines and benchmarks for the implementation of those commitments.

35. There was no more compelling reason for the pursuit of nuclear disarmament than the catastrophic humanitarian consequences of any use of nuclear weapons. Her delegation recommended that the current Conference reiterate the deep concern of States parties regarding the continued risk for humanity represented by the possible use of such weapons; welcome the negotiation, adoption and entry into force of the Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons; acknowledge that that Treaty was an effective measure of nuclear

disarmament contributing to the implementation of article VI and was complementary to the Non-Proliferation Treaty; and reiterate that the Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons would not replace the obligations and commitments already made by States under the Non-Proliferation Treaty and other instruments.

36. Concerns about nuclear risks had gained prominence during discussions leading up to the current Review Conference. Those concerns had arisen from developments related to modernization programmes, security concerns, heightened tension among the nuclear-weapon States and a better understanding of the catastrophic humanitarian consequences of any nuclear weapon explosion. While the nuclear-weapon States bore a special responsibility to reduce the risks, non-nuclear-weapon States, including those that included nuclear weapons in their military doctrines, also had a role to play given that those risks directly affected all States. While non-nuclear-weapon States should not be encumbered with the workload of transparency and confidence-building measures to improve predictability in international relations or creating the environment for nuclear disarmament, the current Conference should consider risk reduction measures that went beyond the nuclear-weapon States minimally providing political signals and engaging in dialogue among themselves.

37. **Mr. Mahmoud** (Egypt) said that the failure of the 2015 Review Conference had compromised progress towards the implementation of the Non-Proliferation Treaty. States parties should take stock of and redress that setback and seize the opportunity presented by the current Review Conference to unconditionally reaffirm their commitment to implementing the Treaty fully.

38. Repeated global calls for the complete elimination of nuclear weapons had continually fallen on deaf ears. The continued existence of large numbers of nuclear weapons posed a grave threat to humankind, and nuclear deterrence remained central to the military and security doctrines of certain States and military alliances. Moreover, some States continued to develop new generations of nuclear weapons, share those weapons with other States and comprehensively review their policies to further develop and increase their nuclear arsenals.

39. The formation of new security alliances directly imperilled the nuclear non-proliferation regime. Certain States continued to resist attempts to achieve progress towards nuclear disarmament while promoting the nuclear non-proliferation regime in respect of other States parties that endangered their strategic interests.

Such actions provided an incentive to other States to attempt to acquire weapons of mass destruction.

40. The same States parties calling for non-proliferation remained oddly silent when it came to promoting the universality of the Non-Proliferation Treaty, amounting to a lack of compliance with the Treaty. It was distressing that, more than 50 years after the Treaty was opened for signature, nuclear weapons remained in existence. Faulty and unconvincing logic underpinned the argument advanced by some nuclear-weapon States, namely, that the political and security climate worldwide was presently not conducive to advancing towards the total elimination of nuclear weapons. To the contrary, making progress on nuclear disarmament would be instrumental to defusing the current volatility and promoting international stability. Moreover, global insecurity would persist until serious, tangible measures were taken to achieve nuclear disarmament. Consequently, Egypt called on the nuclear-weapon States to fulfil their nuclear disarmament obligations without delay, including by taking steps to eliminate their nuclear arsenals. Such obligations must not be tied to political considerations.

41. The international community's growing awareness of the catastrophic humanitarian consequences of nuclear weapons had doubtless helped bring about the conclusion of the Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons, a non-discriminatory legal instrument that served as a corrective to the existing imbalance in the nuclear disarmament and non-proliferation regime.

42. While his delegation supported all nuclear disarmament initiatives, such initiatives must not be treated as objectives in their own right; rather, they were steps on the path to nuclear disarmament. Consequently, any measures strengthened beyond what was agreed at the 1995, 2000 and 2010 Review Conferences must be complementary to, not a substitute for, agreed measures.

43. As part of certain groups and alliances, Egypt had advanced specific recommendations regarding how to achieve progress on nuclear disarmament. Foremost among them was the proposal to convene a conference on the establishment of nuclear-weapon-free zones as an effective mechanism for achieving progress on the first and second pillars of the Treaty. The current Review Conference must encourage the establishment of such zones, particularly in the Middle East, in line with the resolution adopted at the 1995 Review and Extension Conference.

44. **Mr. Hwang** (France) said that the return of war to Europe resulting from the Russian aggression in Ukraine had profoundly affected the international and European peace and security architecture and

multilateral forums, including the current Review Conference. Russian Federation actions in recent months, particularly its aggressive nuclear rhetoric aimed at intimidation and coercion, were not compatible with its commitments under the Non-Proliferation Treaty and the January 2022 joint statement on preventing nuclear war and arms races. States must work collectively to create an environment conducive to progress in the field of nuclear disarmament. Aware of its responsibilities and obligations as a nuclear-weapon State, France would fully participate in those efforts.

45. France was proud to comply with its commitments under article VI of the Treaty, shared the goal of the total elimination of nuclear weapons when the strategic context permitted, and had long maintained its arsenal at the lowest possible level permitted by the security environment. His country had taken considerable unilateral measures since the end of the cold war, including by reducing its arsenal by half; fully dismantling its ground-to-ground nuclear component and reducing its submarine and aerial components; de-targeting; and permanently dismantling its facilities for the production of fissile material for nuclear weapons and its test site in the Pacific. The ambitiousness of those measures attested to his country's strong commitment to disarmament. In the interest of transparency, France had stipulated that its nuclear arsenal was made up of less than 300 weapons. The President of France regularly set out that country's deterrence doctrine, which was limited to defending its vital interests in extreme circumstances of self-defence, in accordance with the Charter of the United Nations.

46. France reaffirmed the negative security assurances it had given to all non-nuclear-weapon States parties that respected their non-proliferation commitments, and had supported the creation of nuclear-weapon-free zones in Latin America, the Pacific, Africa and Central Asia, under the treaties whose protocols it had ratified and under its national declaration of 6 June 1995. France wished to continue the dialogue with the countries of the Association of Southeast Asian Nations in order to advance towards the signing of the Treaty on the Southeast Asia Nuclear Weapon-Free Zone (Treaty of Bangkok), and reaffirmed its support for the establishment of a zone free of weapons of mass destruction and their means of delivery in the Middle East.

47. His delegation called on all States parties to join in setting a positive agenda for nuclear disarmament. The primary goal must be to continue to verifiably reduce the stockpiles resulting from the arms race conducted by the Soviet Union and the United States during the cold war. The extension of the New START

Treaty for five years and the resumption of the strategic dialogue between the United States and the Russian Federation had been positive developments. His delegation supported the resumption of that dialogue when circumstances permitted. France had also called for discussions on ensuring that the security interests of Europeans were taken into account.

48. The negotiation without further delay, in the Conference on Disarmament, of a fissile material cut-off treaty, on the basis of the report of the Special Coordinator ([CD/1299](#)), was an essential step towards creating a world without nuclear weapons. His delegation called on all States that had not already done so to sign and ratify the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty. Discussions on the technical issues of nuclear disarmament verification should be held between nuclear and non-nuclear-weapon States. Efforts must continue on strategic risk reduction through transparency of nuclear doctrines, enhanced dialogue between political and military leaders of the nuclear-weapon States and possessor States, crisis communication tools and measures for reassurance, and prevention and crisis management, as well as dialogue between the nuclear-weapon States and non-nuclear-weapon States.

49. Given the dangers of disconnecting nuclear disarmament issues from their security context, France reiterated its opposition to the Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons, which was likely to undermine the Non-Proliferation Treaty as the cornerstone of the international non-proliferation regime by creating an alternative, incompatible and incomplete norm.

50. **Mr. Alkaabi** (United Arab Emirates) said that the Non-Proliferation Treaty regime faced serious challenges, including with regard to the lack of concrete steps towards disarmament, the existence of States possessing nuclear weapons outside the legal framework of the Treaty, the humanitarian consequences of nuclear weapons; and the long-delayed nuclear-weapon-free zone in the Middle East. In connection with article VI, all States possessing nuclear weapons of all types, including non-strategic and non-deployed nuclear weapons, needed to systematically and continuously reduce such weapons, with a view to their total elimination.

51. Implementation of action 5 of the action plan of the 2010 Review Conference could promote international stability, peace and security by accelerating progress on nuclear disarmament. The current Review Conference should call on all nuclear-weapon States and other States possessing nuclear weapons to further reduce their arsenals, regardless of

type, location or size; reaffirm the undertaking not to increase nuclear weapon arsenals; and further engage in activities that increased confidence and transparency. The quantitative reduction in arsenals should be accompanied by a reduction in the role and significance of nuclear weapons in security strategies and defence doctrines. De-alerting was not only a step towards creating a world free of nuclear weapons but also a means to avoid and reduce the risk of the catastrophic consequences from the unauthorized or accidental launch of a nuclear weapon.

52. The nuclear-weapon States, in line with the principles of irreversibility, verifiability and transparency, should enhance the reporting mechanism and submit national implementation reports, thereby building confidence and trust and facilitating nuclear disarmament. All nuclear-weapon States should provide more detailed information relating to nuclear weapons, in particular to non-strategic weapons. It was also vital to seek the most effective ways to promote disarmament and non-proliferation education, a useful and effective means to advance the goals of the Treaty in support of achieving a nuclear-weapon-free world.

53. Pending entry into force of the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty, States should uphold and maintain a moratorium on nuclear-weapon test explosions and any other nuclear explosions, and assist the Preparatory Commission for the Treaty. States that had yet to ratify that Treaty should do so without delay, particularly the remaining Annex 2 States. His country supported all efforts to reduce the role of nuclear weapons in security doctrines, along with the implementation of transparency measures by the five permanent members of the Security Council and all genuine efforts towards nuclear risk reduction as an interim measure pending the total elimination of nuclear weapons.

54. His delegation recognized that starting negotiations on a fissile material cut-off treaty could substantially contribute to nuclear non-proliferation, implementation of article VI of the Non-Proliferation Treaty and, ultimately, a nuclear-weapon-free world. Their early commencement was a shared priority for all States Parties to the Treaty and, more generally, for the international community.

55. **Mr. Scheinman** (United States of America) said that his country was committed to the work of the Review Committee in both word and deed. As outlined in its national report, it had reduced its nuclear weapons stockpile, reduced the role of nuclear weapons in its national defence strategy and reduced its stocks of fissile material and associated infrastructure. Aware that

that was not enough, the United States would continue working towards eventual nuclear disarmament, a commitment based on its national security interests and on an understanding of the humanitarian impacts of the use of nuclear weapons. Any country that asked others to reject the pursuit of nuclear weapons also had to be willing to reduce – and eventually eliminate – their own stockpiles of such weapons.

56. The previous year, his country had released information on its nuclear stockpile, which, as of September 2020, consisted of 3,750 warheads, a 26 per cent reduction since the 2010 Review Conference. Since the 2015 Review Conference, the United States had dismantled more than 800 nuclear warheads, with approximately 2,000 more retired and awaiting dismantlement. Earlier in 2022, his country had completed that year's Nuclear Posture Review, which underlined the importance and mutually reinforcing nature of deterrence and arms control. The United States would also examine steps to further reduce the risk of nuclear war and the global salience of nuclear weapons. It had chosen to act with restraint in the interest of avoiding actions that could unintentionally add to tensions or misinterpretation. All nuclear-weapon States had an obligation to act responsibly.

57. The United States did not use nuclear weapons to advance an expansionist security policy. It was not developing nuclear-armed hypersonic glide vehicles, nuclear-armed hypersonic cruise missiles, or ballistic or cruise missiles having a dual nuclear and conventional role. And it was not deploying nuclear-armed land-based missiles outside of its national territory. Two other nuclear-weapon States could not make each claims.

58. His Government had moved swiftly to engage the Russian Federation to extend the New START Treaty by five years, to 2026. It had also pushed for the resumption of a strategic stability dialogue between Russia and the United States aimed at reducing risk and laying the groundwork for future arms control. It sought limits on all intercontinental-range nuclear weapons as well as new constraints on non-deployed nuclear weapons and theatre-range, or non-strategic, nuclear weapons and their delivery systems. It was ready to resume dialogue with Russia to shape the future of modern arms control, provided that Russia was prepared to operate in good faith. It also sought to maintain and expand its communication with China and engage in long-overdue discussions on risk reduction. That country's accelerating build-up of nuclear weapons and excessive nuclear opacity increased the chance of inadvertent conflict, miscommunication and the potential for destabilizing arms races.

59. His country supported the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty and was committed to working to achieve its entry into force. Calling on all States possessing nuclear weapons to join it in declaring and maintaining a zero-yield moratorium on nuclear explosive testing, his delegation also continued to support the commencement of negotiations on a fissile material cut-off treaty, which would limit the dangers of a new nuclear arms race, and strongly encouraged all States to join it in observing a moratorium on the production of fissile material for use in nuclear weapons, pending negotiation of such a treaty. To improve understanding and shape future efforts, the United States continued to pursue the “Creating an Environment for Nuclear Disarmament” initiative and the International Partnership for Nuclear Disarmament Verification.

60. The United States also continued to advance strategic risk reduction, which merited special attention at the current Review Conference. His country had a long history of implementing measures to reduce the risk of strategic misunderstanding and prevent nuclear war. In January 2022, the five nuclear-weapon States had jointly affirmed that a nuclear war could not be won and must never be fought. His delegation had been deeply disturbed by the nuclear sabre-rattling of the Russian Federation in the weeks and months after joining that statement. Any use of a nuclear weapon would have far-reaching consequences and increase the risk of catastrophic escalation. His delegation’s understanding of what was at stake was why it was committed to turning ideas about risk reduction into actions.

61. **Mr. Alqaisi** (Jordan) said that all initiatives to rid the world of nuclear weapons and refocus armament efforts on development needed support. In view of the alarming failure to achieve tangible progress on nuclear disarmament and implement the obligations agreed at previous Review Conferences, comprehensive, balanced dialogue in Main Committee I was vital, and a clear programme of work on nuclear disarmament would help to ensure the success of the current Review Conference.

62. The credibility of the Non-Proliferation Treaty hinged on implementing its three pillars in a balanced manner and achieving the universality of the Treaty. States parties, especially the five nuclear-weapon States, must uphold their pledges under article VI of the Treaty without preconditions and disarm completely within a defined time frame, in line with the Treaty and the relevant agreements reached at previous Review Conferences.

63. **Mr. Schelstraete** (Belgium) said that Belgium supported the proposals put forward in the working papers of the Stockholm Initiative for Nuclear Disarmament entitled “Stepping stones for advancing nuclear disarmament” (NPT/CONF.2020/WP.6) and “A nuclear risk reduction package” (NPT/CONF.2020/WP.9). Those proposals enjoyed cross-regional support and should inform the Committee’s work. The current Review Conference should endorse the January 2022 joint statement of the five nuclear-weapon States on preventing nuclear war and avoiding arms races that a nuclear war could not be won and must never be fought. The aggressive nuclear rhetoric of Russia in recent months must nevertheless be heeded, as even veiled references to nuclear weapons gave the impression of coercion or intimidation, and suggested that the threshold for the use of such weapons was being lowered. Restraint in public discourse should be restored.

64. The extension of the New START Treaty in 2021 demonstrated the irreplaceable on-going role of arms control in strategic stability and that tangible results were possible, even in times of growing insecurity and deep mistrust among the major Powers. Belgium was encouraged by the continued implementation of that Treaty and welcomed the commitment of the President of the United States to negotiate a successor treaty, which would require determination and agreement on extensive verification measures. Belgium supported the reduction by one third of the strategic arsenals of the United States and Russia, and called for the rebalancing of non-strategic arsenals as part of an effective dismantling policy. Freezing increases in the total cap on nuclear warheads could also be considered.

65. While the holders of the two largest arsenals bore a special responsibility, all nuclear-weapon States should reduce their arsenals, and should be measured by the same yardstick on other criteria, such as transparency, reduction of nuclear stockpiles and commitment to arms control dialogue. Belgium welcomed the stockpiles and delivery systems reductions by the United Kingdom and France in recent decades, and encouraged China, the only nuclear-weapon State that continued to expand its nuclear arsenal, to follow their example. China should also declare a formal moratorium on the production of fissile material for military purposes and should increase transparency regarding its doctrine and posture. Additionally, Russia should stop its war on international law and end its development of new, disruptive delivery systems.

66. The elimination of nuclear weapons was impossible when nuclear tests were still conducted.

States pleading for disarmament had no justification for refusing to accede to the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty, and no State should wait for others to act before acceding to that Treaty. The working paper on interlinkage between that Treaty and the Non-Proliferation Treaty (NPT/CONF.2020/WP.19), submitted by Belgium and 16 other countries, contained proposals for steps to be taken by States to reinforce that Treaty and its verification regime, and to facilitate its entry into force. Even States that had not yet adhered to the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty could host facilities within its International Monitoring System or could sign facility agreements in order to support the completion of the System. The verification system under the Treaty had stimulated international scientific cooperation, which could be further developed, including through regional cooperation. Nuclear-weapon States could also take steps to permanently close and dismantle nuclear test sites.

67. Owing to their destructive power, nuclear weapons required a different disarmament approach from that of other weapons. The principles of reversibility and verifiability were essential to the achievement of lasting progress, and there was no shortcut to a nuclear-weapon-free world. Hence, the participation of Belgium as an observer at the first Meeting of States Parties to the Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons did not represent a first step towards signing that Treaty, which was incompatible with its commitments as a member of the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) and with its support for the nuclear deterrence policy of NATO.

68. The verification of nuclear disarmament required new techniques and procedures. Belgium actively contributed to such efforts as a member of the International Partnership for Nuclear Disarmament Verification, under whose auspices its national nuclear research centre had conducted a test of plutonium measurement methods, and which in 2022 had held the first in-person meetings in Brussels since the onset of the coronavirus disease (COVID-19) pandemic.

69. **Ms. Hyvärinen** (Finland) said that disarmament was a gradual process, requiring proper attention to the legitimate security concerns of all involved. States possessing nuclear weapons, whether or not they were parties to the Non-Proliferation Treaty, must take verifiable and irreversible steps to achieve a nuclear-weapon-free world. While nuclear disarmament was primarily the responsibility of such States, it was a matter of concern for all nations.

70. Finland condemned the unprovoked and unjustified Russian Federation attack on Ukraine. The

Russian threat to use nuclear weapons and its raising of nuclear alert levels undermined nuclear disarmament, and Finland called on that country to cease its reckless behaviour. Although the total number of nuclear weapons had decreased significantly since the cold war, Finland was concerned that the trend might be reversed; that must not be allowed to happen, and an arms race must be avoided. Finland welcomed the extension of the New START Treaty; the States with the largest nuclear weapons arsenals must continue to spearhead nuclear arms control and disarmament efforts, and others must follow their example.

71. All States possessing nuclear weapons must commit themselves to nuclear disarmament and accelerate their efforts in that regard; the nuclear-weapon States must make enhanced commitments in that area at the current Review Conference, particularly by committing themselves to accelerating the implementation of the 13 steps set out in the Final Document of the 2000 Review Conference and of the action plan of the 2010 Review Conference. They must also commit themselves not to increase the number of nuclear weapons in their possession, nor to develop new nuclear weapons as interim steps towards nuclear disarmament. As part of arms control and disarmament, they must further commit themselves to rapidly reducing the number of non-strategic nuclear weapons, and to providing enhanced negative security assurances to non-nuclear-weapon States and nuclear-weapon-free zones, with a view to establishing an international treaty in that regard.

72. The detonation of a nuclear weapon would have catastrophic humanitarian consequences, and it was in the international community's common interest to reduce the risk of the intended or unintended use of nuclear weapons. While not a substitute for nuclear disarmament, nuclear risk reduction could advance that aim, and must therefore be an integral part of the deliberations and outcomes of the current Review Conference. Finland actively sought to find common ground in the area of nuclear risk reduction and, as a member of the Stockholm Initiative, had contributed to its working paper entitled "A nuclear risk reduction package" (NPT/CONF.2020/WP.9). The Conference should thoroughly consider the proposals contained therein.

73. The advancement of nuclear disarmament and the achievement of a nuclear-weapon-free world required political will and serious negotiations, taking into account the security concerns of all nations. Making progress and avoiding backtracking were more important than knowing exactly when those goals would be achieved.

74. **Mr. Romero Puentes** (Cuba) said that the working papers submitted by the Group of Non-Aligned States Parties for consideration at the current Review Conference represented the views of the majority of Member States, providing an essential basis for the final document of the Conference. No substantive progress had been made in implementing the nuclear disarmament measures to which States parties had committed themselves at the current Conference or the nuclear disarmament objectives set out in the action plan of the 2010 Review Conference. States parties must strictly comply with the Non-Proliferation Treaty; Cuba rejected the selective application of that Treaty. Nuclear-weapon States bore the primary responsibility for achieving nuclear disarmament.

75. The entry into force of the Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons represented a milestone in United Nations history, as it enshrined in international law the unlawfulness and illegality of nuclear weapons by fully prohibiting the existence, use and threat of use of such weapons and of all types of nuclear tests. That Treaty was not only compatible with the Non-Proliferation Treaty, but also strengthened and complemented it. As the fifth State to ratify the Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons, Cuba recognized its value as a nuclear disarmament instrument and urged all States that had not yet done so to ensure its timely universalization by signing and ratifying the Treaty.

76. The high-level plenary meeting of the General Assembly to observe the International Day for the Total Elimination of Nuclear Weapons, held annually since 2013 with the support and participation of the vast majority of Member States, demonstrated that nuclear disarmament remained the highest disarmament priority. Transparent, verifiable and irreversible nuclear disarmament was the only sustainable way to free the world from the threat of nuclear weapons and their catastrophic consequences, and any other interpretations of the matter were a distraction.

77. The ongoing modernization of existing nuclear arsenals and the development of new nuclear weapons, the automation of conventional weapons systems and the growing link between those systems and nuclear weapons systems, the strengthening of nuclear weapons' role in military doctrines, and the revision by certain States of their nuclear postures so as to enable consideration of the use of nuclear weapons, including in response to so-called non-nuclear strategic threats, were prime examples of the continued failure to comply with the Non-Proliferation Treaty and the commitments made at the 1995, 2000 and 2010 Review Conferences. The Conference on Disarmament should begin

negotiations on a non-discriminatory, multilateral and verifiable fissile material cut-off treaty that covered existing stocks. The adoption of such a treaty would be a positive but ultimately insufficient step towards nuclear disarmament.

78. In the final document of the current Review Conference, States parties should not only reaffirm previous commitments but also put forward concrete and measurable steps to achieve nuclear disarmament within a defined time frame. The advancement of such concepts as so-called nuclear deterrence and the allocation of billions of dollars to the serial production of nuclear weapons, the development of new types of such weapons and the modernization of existing ones undermined claims regarding the existence of a shared commitment to the achievement of a nuclear-weapon-free world. The principles of verification, transparency and irreversibility must be essential components of multilateral and bilateral treaties and unilateral measures concerning nuclear disarmament. That non-nuclear-weapon States Parties to the Non-Proliferation Treaty continued to be subject to strict verification regimes, when the nuclear-weapon States parties had made no tangible progress in that regard, was unjustifiable. The nuclear-weapon States must demonstrate a constructive spirit and establish official, irreversible agreements prohibiting the use or threat of use of nuclear weapons against States located in nuclear-weapon-free zones or against any non-nuclear-weapon State at any time and under any circumstances.

79. **Mr. Parnohadiningrat** (Indonesia) said that the implementation of the disarmament pillar of the Non-Proliferation Treaty lagged significantly behind that of the pillars of non-proliferation and the peaceful uses of nuclear energy. The mutually reinforcing nature of the Treaty's three pillars meant that disarmament should enjoy the same attention as non-proliferation. Like non-proliferation, disarmament was not subject to conditions. States parties must fulfil their current and past nuclear disarmament obligations and commitments. Non-nuclear weapon States must be denied access to nuclear weapons capabilities, including through the sharing of such capabilities. Any nuclear-weapons-grade material to which non-nuclear-weapon States had access must be strictly monitored and safeguarded by the competent multilateral body. To strengthen States parties' commitment to both non-proliferation and disarmament, the current Review Conference must therefore begin discussions on verification and monitoring arrangements for naval nuclear propulsion programmes.

80. The delegitimization of nuclear weapons was the first step towards disarmament. Ending the continued possession and modernization of nuclear weapons was as important as ending the ambition to possess such weapons. The nuclear-weapon States and States protected under “nuclear umbrella” arrangements should exclude nuclear weapons and nuclear options from their strategic doctrines as a matter of urgency, as the legitimization of nuclear weapons undermined international peace and security.

81. Strengthening the disarmament architecture was also essential, and Indonesia welcomed the entry into force of the Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons, which complemented the Non-Proliferation Treaty. While the universalization and full implementation of the Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons should be promoted by all States parties, a convention prohibiting the use, testing, production and development of nuclear weapons was nevertheless necessary. The nuclear-weapon States should provide legally binding negative security assurances, although such assurances were not a substitute for, but rather an interim step towards, total nuclear disarmament. Moreover, the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty was critical to preventing the proliferation of nuclear weapons; its prompt entry into force and universalization were therefore necessary. The remaining Annex 2 countries should sign and ratify the Treaty as a matter of urgency.

82. The indefinite extension of the Non-Proliferation Treaty did not imply the indefinite possession of nuclear weapons by the nuclear-weapon States. The total elimination of the global nuclear arsenal was the only true guarantee against the threat of nuclear weapons. Under current global security conditions, the international community must renew its commitment not only to the multilateral disarmament architecture, but to the spirit of multilateralism itself.

83. **Ms. Fitzmaurice Gray** (Ireland) said that the current Review Conference was taking place at a time of nuclear danger. Ireland condemned the nuclear threats made by Russia as part of its war of aggression against Ukraine, as they had serious implications for the Committee’s work and for the credibility of the Non-Proliferation Treaty. The Conference must send a clear signal that such threats were entirely unacceptable.

84. The lack of progress on disarmament had detrimental effects. Since the 2015 Review Conference, important arms control agreements had been eroded, the role of nuclear weapons in security doctrines had increased, weapons systems had been extensively modernized and qualitatively improved, nuclear

arsenals were increasing in number and diversity, and reduced transparency was contributing to growing escalation and miscalculation risks. Such trends were inconsistent with the international community’s objective of a nuclear-weapon-free world and must be reversed, as the alternative was a new nuclear arms race.

85. States parties’ compliance with their obligations under article VI of the Non-Proliferation Treaty and the fulfilment by the nuclear-weapon States of their unequivocal commitment to accomplish the total elimination of their nuclear arsenals were central to the work of the current Review Conference. The slow progress in the fulfilment of nuclear disarmament obligations under the Treaty was untenable. The indefinite possession of nuclear weapons ran counter to the object and purpose of the disarmament pillar and jeopardized the credibility and effectiveness of the Treaty as a whole.

86. The 2010 Review Conference had expressed deep concern regarding the catastrophic humanitarian consequences of any use of nuclear weapons, an understanding since reinforced by growing evidence and the conferences on the humanitarian impact of such weapons held since 2013, including the most recent, held in Vienna in June 2022. Ireland called for the current Review Conference to state that the use of nuclear weapons would have catastrophic immediate and long-term consequences, creating a humanitarian emergency well beyond the response capacity of States and international organizations. Furthermore, such consequences disproportionately affected women and girls.

87. The total, irreversible and verifiable elimination of nuclear weapons was the only way to completely remove the risks posed by such weapons. The current Review Conference must, as a matter of urgency and with the involvement of non-nuclear-weapon States, formulate risk reduction measures, with appropriate benchmarks and transparency, in order to ensure their implementation. Risk reduction could not legitimize the indefinite possession of nuclear weapons, and the growth and modernization of nuclear arsenals, as well as the development of new means of delivery, were incompatible with a meaningful and responsible approach to nuclear risk reduction.

88. A vision of a more peaceful world, underpinned by the necessary political will, had led a large majority of Member States, including Ireland, to adopt the Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons, providing renewed impetus to the debate on nuclear disarmament. The outcome of the first Meeting of States Parties to that Treaty had demonstrated its value as a means of

implementing article VI of the Non-Proliferation Treaty. During the negotiations on the Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons, Ireland had led the way in ensuring that Treaty's complementarity with the Non-Proliferation Treaty, and hoped that the positive contribution of the Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons would be reflected in the final document of the current Review Conference.

89. Although encouraged by additional States having ratified the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty since the 2015 Review Conference, Ireland was concerned that the Treaty had not yet entered into force, despite having been repeatedly recognized at previous Review Conferences as a specific step towards nuclear disarmament. Remaining Annex 2 States must adhere to the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty without delay or conditions. States must observe the moratorium on nuclear weapon test explosions and any other nuclear explosions, and refrain from any actions that ran counter to the object and purpose of the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty. Such steps nevertheless did not have the same permanence or legally binding effect as the entry into force of that Treaty.

90. Ireland did not share the view that progress towards nuclear disarmament could only be made under ideal security conditions, and was encouraged by the offer of the United States to resume a strategic stability dialogue with Russia. Initiated by Ireland at the height of the cold war, the Non-Proliferation Treaty demonstrated the potential of multilateralism. Disarmament enabled security and built confidence and trust, while nuclear weapons ensured security for no one. The total elimination of such weapons was the only way to protect humanity from their catastrophic consequences.

91. **Mr. Bencini** (Italy) said that Italy maintained its strong and unwavering support for the Non-Proliferation Treaty as the cornerstone of the global nuclear non-proliferation regime, of nuclear disarmament efforts and of the multilateral architecture overall. In the current challenging international environment, it was necessary to support the Treaty, whose article VI provided the only realistic legal framework for attaining a world without nuclear weapons while promoting international stability and upholding the principle of undiminished security for all.

92. The concern of Italy regarding the catastrophic consequences of the use of nuclear weapons guided its efforts to promote nuclear disarmament, with a view to achieving a peaceful and secure world free of nuclear weapons. That goal could be attained through a progressive approach based on specific measures,

resulting in effective, verifiable and irreversible nuclear disarmament. The nuclear-weapon States bore essential responsibility for the advancement of disarmament under article VI of the Treaty. While Italy welcomed the agreement between the United States and Russia to extend the New START Treaty and engage in a bilateral security dialogue, as well as the relevant efforts of the five permanent members of the Security Council, the nuclear-weapon States with the largest arsenals must further reduce those arsenals in order to effectively advance nuclear disarmament.

93. The significant deterioration of the international disarmament and non-proliferation architecture resulting from the unprovoked and unjustifiable aggression of the Russian Federation against Ukraine could not be overlooked. Italy strongly condemned the use of intimidating nuclear rhetoric by a nuclear-weapon State in connection with the invasion of a non-nuclear weapon State, as well as the betrayal of the security assurances provided when Ukraine acceded to the Non-Proliferation Treaty. Despite the challenges facing the Treaty, States parties must fully implement its provisions and the commitments made at previous Review Conferences.

94. Most of the practical and effective steps necessary to achieve disarmament were contained in the action plan of the 2010 Review Conference, whose implementation Italy strongly supported. One such step was the prompt entry into force of the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty, a cornerstone of the disarmament and non-proliferation agenda and of the broader multilateral architecture. As a staunch supporter of that Treaty and as co-coordinator of the Conference on Facilitating the Entry into Force of the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty for 2021–2023, Italy strongly favoured its universalization and called on States that had not yet done so, in particular the remaining Annex 2 States, to sign and ratify it without further delay. In the meantime, States must observe the moratorium on nuclear weapon test explosions and any other nuclear explosions, and refrain from any actions that could undermine the object and purpose of the Treaty.

95. The Conference on Disarmament should immediately begin negotiations on a fissile material cut-off treaty and, pending the conclusion of such a treaty, all relevant States should maintain or declare a moratorium on the production of fissile material for nuclear weapons. The Conference on Disarmament should also, in the context of a comprehensive and balanced programme of work, resume substantive discussions on negative security assurances in order to develop recommendations on all aspects of that issue,

not excluding an international legally binding instrument. Italy also supported the International Partnership for Nuclear Disarmament Verification, given the importance of such initiatives in building trust and confidence among the nuclear-weapon States and non-nuclear-weapon States.

96. Sustained efforts were required to achieve the full and balanced implementation of the Non-Proliferation Treaty. The current Review Conference provided a unique opportunity for States parties to engage in open and transparent dialogue, identifying areas of convergence permitting progress. Italy strongly supported such risk reduction measures as negative security assurances, transparency, awareness-raising and dialogue. While not a substitute for disarmament, such measures could increase security and pave the way for tangible progress towards the implementation of article VI of the Treaty.

97. **Ms. Sayej** (State of Palestine) said that compliance with article VI of the Non-Proliferation Treaty was neither optional nor subject to conditions. Similarly, possession of nuclear weapons was not a legal right or entitlement, nor could it continue indefinitely; as such weapons were and had always been illegal, their existence was intended to be temporary. Therefore, all States parties, particularly the nuclear-weapon States, should fulfil their obligations and commitments under such instruments as the Treaty, the decision on principles and objectives for nuclear non-proliferation and disarmament adopted at the 1995 Review and Extension Conference, and the action plan of the 2010 Review Conference.

98. The Non-Proliferation Treaty was the product of finely tuned compromises, representing an accepted balance of obligations for which accountability could be measured, monitored and strengthened, developed within parameters defined for negotiations on a comprehensive treaty. In that regard, bilateral negotiations on nuclear disarmament could neither be substituted for nor supplant multilateral negotiations, and must not undermine the Treaty. The elimination of nuclear weapons was a matter of international priority and required collective and inclusive efforts.

99. The State of Palestine was horrified that the use and the threat of use of nuclear weapons had insidiously seeped into political, military and diplomatic doctrines. That development had been exacerbated by arguments legitimizing the existence of nuclear weapons as a matter of so-called nuclear deterrence and by the unabated modernization of nuclear weapons, their delivery systems and infrastructure. Nuclear deterrence was an oxymoron, and was neither sane, safe nor

sustainable. Peace and stability would not result from the threat of mutual assured destruction. International security was linked to national security, and could not be achieved in the presence of nuclear weapons. The only existential and security threat faced by the international community was that posed by the existence of nuclear weapons; that fact was at the core of the disarmament architecture and of the Non-Proliferation Treaty. Her delegation hoped that the outcome of the current Review Conference would include unequivocal commitments and specific steps to engage in new multilateral negotiations on the total disarmament and elimination of nuclear weapons.

100. It was not within the purview of the current Review Conference to assess whether or not the nuclear-weapon States were acting responsibly; the mere existence of nuclear weapons was irresponsible. The dichotomy between the nuclear weapon States and non-nuclear weapon States undermined a half-century of efforts to develop and implement the Non-Proliferation Treaty. The Treaty's strength lay in its totality and in the political and moral will of the international community to take prompt and coordinated action, given that disarmament was becoming both increasingly pressing and increasingly harder to achieve. The Conference must produce a successful outcome to fulfil the world's hopes for peace.

101. **Archbishop Caccia** (Holy See) said that international relations must not be dominated by military force, mutual intimidation and the parading of stockpiles of arms. The abolition of nuclear weapons was a necessary and feasible objective, and the Non-Proliferation Treaty was vital to its achievement.

102. A number of issues warranted the international community's urgent attention. The war in Ukraine and the risk of the use of nuclear weapons demonstrated the need for immediate action to reduce nuclear threats. The joint statement of the five nuclear-weapon States on preventing nuclear war and avoiding arms races, reaffirming the principle that a nuclear war could not be won and must never be fought, was a positive restatement of their commitment to the goals of the Non-Proliferation Treaty. That statement was nevertheless incompatible with the modernization efforts of nuclear-weapon States, and the spirit of the Treaty had been undermined by the prospect of a new arms race. All nuclear-weapon States must develop practical policies to reduce nuclear threats, remove nuclear weapons from high-alert status and strengthen threat reduction measures, in order to ensure compatibility between actions and rhetoric.

103. Progress on disarmament must be restored. A handful of States were blocking the entry into force of the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty, and negotiations on a fissile material cut-off treaty had not yet begun. The conflict in Ukraine demonstrated the danger of abandoning such arms control agreements as the Intermediate-Range Nuclear Forces Treaty and the Treaty on Open Skies, as well as the urgent need to advance risk reduction measures. The entry into force of the Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons was a powerful testament to the rejection, by its 66 States parties, of the logic of mutual assured destruction, as it provided for the restorative treatment of persons and areas negatively affected by the development, testing and use of nuclear weapons. He hoped that all States parties to the Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons could advance those aims, which complemented those of the Non-Proliferation Treaty.

104. The role of nuclear weapons in global security must be reconsidered in order to end reliance on nuclear deterrence and its promise of inflicting deadly destruction in response to nuclear or conventional threats against, or attacks on, a State or its allies. There were no “legacy rights” to nuclear weapons. Currently, the only legally binding instrument concerning existing nuclear weapons stockpiles and delivery vehicles was the New START Treaty between Russia and the United States, which had been renewed in 2021 and would expire in 2026. No negotiations on a successor treaty involving the three other nuclear-weapon States, let alone other States that possessed nuclear weapons, were under way. The nuclear-weapon States should consider setting ceilings on their stockpiles and adopting no-first-use policies as a step towards nuclear disarmament and de-escalation. Nuclear and conventional weapons must be forbidden in outer space, given its significant benefits for humankind, including, paradoxically, those related to monitoring arms control agreements and military forces. As the use, threat of use and possession of nuclear weapons were immoral, the achievement of a nuclear-weapon-free world was therefore a moral requirement, as well as a legal commitment under the Non-Proliferation Treaty.

105. **Mr. Ilyassov** (Kazakhstan) said that the unprecedented threats and challenges faced by countries across the economic spectrum since the outbreak of the COVID-19 pandemic must not be compounded by nuclear warfare or nuclear pollution of any kind. The current Review Conference was therefore timely. Kazakhstan would work to ensure enduring stability and security for all. As long as nuclear weapons existed, fully assuring their non-use would be impossible. As diplomacy resumed following the onset of the

pandemic, its potential must be fully harnessed at the Conference.

106. The Non-Proliferation Treaty had become an integral part of the international security and nuclear disarmament process soon after the Semipalatinsk nuclear test site in Kazakhstan was closed in 1991. Despite the Treaty’s potential, progress in its implementation had been slow. Given the lack of progress on disarmament, the Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons had assumed increased significance and should be strengthened. The international community should also build on previous progress and accelerate the entry into force of the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty. Inspiration and critical moments should be harnessed in order to advance daring visions and pioneering initiatives.

107. The nuclear Powers must take effective steps to eliminate nuclear weapons in accordance with article VI of the Non-Proliferation Treaty. Four steps in particular must be taken, with no limits on the extension of their validity. First, existing moratoriums on nuclear testing should be maintained, and States that had not yet done so, particularly the Annex 2 States, should ratify the Comprehensive Nuclear Test Ban Treaty as soon as possible. Second, the production or modernization of nuclear weapons must be halted, and a database of the types and status of such weapons should be established, as a universally recognized moral obligation. Third, a moratorium on the production of fissile material for military purposes should be declared to ensure the total elimination of weapons-grade fissile material, and States that possessed and produced such material should be required to provide official information about their stocks and production. Fourth, the role of nuclear weapons in the security doctrines and military postures of the nuclear-weapon States should be reduced.

108. **Mr. Al-taie** (Iraq) said that his Government was concerned that the nuclear-weapon States maintained sizable nuclear arsenals, with some 12,750 nuclear warheads remaining in existence a quarter century after the indefinite extension of the Non-Proliferation Treaty. Those States also continued to develop new generations of such weapons, which figured prominently in their military and security doctrines, in contravention of their obligations under the Treaty. His delegation therefore called on the nuclear-weapon States to take prompt and serious action to eliminate their nuclear arsenals, as the only possible guarantee against the use or threat of use of such weapons.

109. Efforts must be made to strike a balance between the nuclear disarmament obligations of the nuclear-weapon States and the nuclear non-proliferation

obligations of non-nuclear-weapon States, in line with articles I and II of the Treaty. In that connection, his delegation fully supported international efforts aimed at the conclusion of an unconditional, legally binding international instrument on security assurances against the use or threat of use of nuclear weapons.

110. The volatile international climate made it imperative for all States parties to work earnestly and with sincere political will to strengthen the nuclear disarmament regime by promoting the universality of all instruments relating to weapons of mass destruction, in particular nuclear weapons. Against that backdrop, Iraq called on States that had yet to ratify the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty, especially Annex 2 States and the Israeli entity, to do so in order to facilitate its entry into force, 27 years after its opening for signature.

111. There was an urgent need to negotiate a non-discriminatory, multilateral fissile material cut-off treaty. Iraq also called for the implementation of the five points on nuclear disarmament proposed by the Secretary-General in 2008, the 13 steps adopted at the 2000 Review Conference, and outcomes of previous Review Conferences and other international arrangements.

112. **Mr. Štěpánek** (Czechia) said that current circumstances must not be allowed to hinder the success of the current Review Conference. A balanced approach must be taken to the three pillars of the Non-Proliferation Treaty. No new entity should be denied the right to the peaceful use of nuclear energy for both energy and non-energy applications. Nevertheless, existing rules and obligations should be strictly observed and compliance therewith should be duly verified, in order to prevent the proliferation of nuclear weapons and the possible misuse of nuclear material and technology.

113. Complete nuclear disarmament should remain a final goal for the international community, regardless of the timeline for its achievement. The Czech Republic would never recognize as nuclear-weapon States any States that were not among the five permanent members of the Security Council. The complete elimination of nuclear weapons could only be achieved under certain conditions. The effective operation of the non-proliferation regime on a global scale, together with a robust verification regime under which assurances of the irreversibility of nuclear disarmament were provided, were indispensable to the achievement of a nuclear-weapon-free world. States parties must therefore faithfully implement the action plan of the 2010 Review Conference.

114. The Czech Republic attached great importance to the commencement and prompt conclusion, by the Conference on Disarmament, of negotiations on a legally binding fissile-material cut-off treaty, which was the next logical step towards nuclear disarmament. States that had not yet signed or ratified the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty should do so. Pending the entry into force of that Treaty, the Czech Republic welcomed the moratorium on nuclear weapon test explosions and called on States to refrain from any actions that ran counter to the Treaty. The Czech Republic had been honoured to serve as Chair of the Preparatory Commission for the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty Organization in 2021 and supported the efforts of the Provisional Technical Secretariat of the Preparatory Commission to further develop the verification regime under that Treaty, in order to transform the Treaty into a strong non-proliferation and confidence-building instrument.

115. The Czech Republic attached great importance to internationally recognized nuclear-weapon-free zones, established on the basis of arrangements accepted by and acceptable to all States in the regions concerned. Such acceptance overwhelmingly existed in the Middle East. As a non-nuclear-weapon State, the Czech Republic would continue to fulfil its obligations under the Non-Proliferation Treaty and remained committed to achieving and maintaining a world free of nuclear weapons and all other weapons of mass destruction.

116. **Mr. Bugajski** (Poland) said that Poland strongly supported the implementation of provisions relating to pillars of the Non-Proliferation Treaty, in particular article VI. The military aggression of Russia against Ukraine was a fundamental breach of international legal principles and ran counter to the Non-Proliferation Treaty, which provided that States must refrain in their international relations from the threat or use of force against the territorial integrity or political independence of any State. Poland strongly condemned the Russian invasion, which represented a blatant violation of the Budapest Memorandum and an open rejection of engagement in substantial dialogue on nuclear issues in order to increase transparency and reduce risk. Russia must stop its aggression, immediately cease all military action and withdraw its forces from Ukraine.

117. In the midst of the conflict in Europe, Moscow continued to make threats regarding the use of nuclear weapons and to put its strategic forces on high alert. Russians were illegally occupying the Zaporizhzhia nuclear power plant, terrorizing its personnel and using heavy military equipment shielded by the centre of the plant. Russia was currently the biggest direct threat to global peace and security, including in the nuclear

domain, and was destroying the rules-based international order centred on multilateralism. Those actions would have long-lasting implications for the entire nuclear disarmament regime, including the Non-Proliferation Treaty and its first pillar. Although 2022 had begun with a small sign of optimism in the form of the joint statement of the five nuclear-weapon States on preventing nuclear war and avoiding arms races, that statement had already been breached by Russia, which had failed to comply with its non-proliferation, disarmament and arms control agreements and commitments.

118. The entire international community, including other States and civil society, should clearly condemn Russia and its behaviour in the nuclear domain. Poland was concerned that the nuclear strategy of Russia and its modernization of its nuclear weapon systems, including the increase in its non-strategic nuclear weapons, indicated an increasingly aggressive posture of strategic intimidation. Moreover, the recent announcement by Belarus of its non-nuclear status, pursuant to amendments to its Constitution, as well as other signals and declarations by that country indicating that it might host nuclear weapons from Russia on its territory, compounded the situation. Russia was clearly violating article VI of the Treaty and, for years, had made no progress in the area of nuclear disarmament. Such progress was only possible through effective, verifiable and irreversible disarmament, in accordance with article VI. Poland and the other countries of the Non-Proliferation and Disarmament Initiative had submitted proposals in that regard for consideration at the current Review Conference. Any further steps taken to facilitate nuclear disarmament should take into account the current security environment, an approach that was particularly important in view of the ongoing invasion of Ukraine by Russia.

119. The future of the global arms control system must be considered in a situation in which mutual trust and confidence based on respect for international law and order had been shattered. At present, overall strategic stability should be maintained, and the New START Treaty should be followed by a broader successor treaty covering all nuclear weapons, including non-strategic nuclear weapons in Europe, and new types of nuclear weapons. China should also engage constructively in such efforts.

120. **Mr. Baumann** (Switzerland) said that Switzerland was concerned about the threats of the possible use of nuclear weapons made in the context of the military aggression of Russia against Ukraine. Switzerland condemned nuclear threats of all types, as they ran counter to fundamental norms, particularly the

principles and rules of international law, including the Charter of the United Nations.

121. Switzerland was also concerned about the recent lack or, in some cases, reversal of progress towards nuclear disarmament. Instead of reductions in global arsenals, as provided for in the action plan of the 2010 Review Conference, there had been quantitative increases in the arsenals of some nuclear-weapon States, along with significant efforts to modernize nuclear arsenals, including less predictable and detectable delivery systems, potentially undermining strategic stability. The lack of progress in reducing the role of nuclear weapons in security strategies and doctrines was also concerning, particularly in view of the regrettable developments of the past year. There had been no significant progress towards the widespread adoption of “no-first-use” or “sole purpose” doctrines, or towards the provision of robust negative security assurances.

122. It was regrettable that, 25 years after its negotiation, the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty had still not entered into force and that no progress had been made in banning the production of fissile material for nuclear weapons. In view of the expiration of the New START Treaty in 2026, talks on strategic stability among the nuclear-weapon States must therefore resume as soon as possible, so that new arms control instruments could be developed. The number of participants in such talks should be gradually increased, and their scope should be broadened to include issues such as cyberspace, outer space and hypersonic weapons. China in particular should play a more prominent role in arms control processes.

123. The Committee must define the steps necessary to resume progress towards nuclear disarmament. Existing commitments remained valid, despite the evolution of international conditions. Clear and specific steps must therefore be taken to implement the action plan of the 2010 Review Conference and, by extension, article VI of the Non-Proliferation Treaty. Proposals for such steps had been included in the working paper of the Stockholm Initiative entitled “Stepping stones for advancing nuclear disarmament” (NPT/CONF.2020/WP.6).

124. Although it had not received the necessary attention during previous review cycles, nuclear risk reduction had become a priority, owing to the deterioration of the strategic environment and certain technological developments. The risk posed by nuclear weapons would persist until all nuclear arsenals were dismantled. Nuclear risk reduction should be integrated into nuclear disarmament efforts, and the current Review Conference could build on the proposals made by the Stockholm Initiative in that regard. The

Conference should adopt practical measures to achieve nuclear risk reduction, as well as establishing a follow-up process.

125. Progress towards nuclear disarmament was essential, given the catastrophic humanitarian consequences of the use of nuclear weapons. In its final document, the current Review Conference should reiterate its concern at those consequences, as it had done in 2010. It should also endorse the view, expressed in the joint statement of the five nuclear-weapon States on preventing nuclear war and avoiding arms races, that a nuclear war could not be won and must never be fought. Furthermore, it should emphasize that, to preserve the humanity and security of all peoples, nuclear weapons must never again be used, as their use was inconceivable under the principles and rules of international humanitarian law. The Conference should also condemn the threat of use of nuclear weapons; the Committee should note the entry into force of the Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons, and the Conference should clarify the nature and ensure the constructiveness of the relationship between that Treaty and the Non-Proliferation Treaty.

126. **Ms. Nilsson** (Sweden) said that the current Review Conference was taking place in a deeply challenging security environment. Sweden condemned in the strongest terms the brutal and unprovoked aggression against Ukraine, which had been invaded and threatened with nuclear weapons by the Russian Federation in flagrant violation of international law, including the Charter of the United Nations. Her delegation called on Russia to abide by its international obligations, immediately cease all military actions and withdraw from Ukraine.

127. The continuing expansion and modernization of nuclear arsenals, the lack of transparency and restraint, and the dismantling of important tenets of the nuclear arms control architecture all gave cause for great concern. While the nuclear-weapon States bore special responsibility in achieving the common goal of a nuclear weapon free world, all States should contribute. Actual progress was needed to uphold and strengthen the international disarmament and non-proliferation regime.

128. Together with the 15 other members of the Stockholm Initiative and the 24 States that had aligned with its two working papers, Sweden was doing its part to achieve progress in an ambitious and realistic manner. Through political engagement, the Initiative had sought to rebuild trust by identifying viable short-term measures that could pave the way for further steps.

129. The entry into force of the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty and the adoption of a fissile material cut-off treaty were two of the building blocks needed to achieve the objectives of the Non-Proliferation Treaty. Underscoring her Government's unwavering political and technical support of the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty Organization, she urged all remaining Annex 2 States to immediately sign and ratify the Test-Ban Treaty. All existing moratoriums on nuclear test explosions must be maintained pending its entry into force.

130. Sweden called for immediate negotiations on, and the establishment of a treaty banning, the production of fissile material for use in nuclear weapons or other explosive devices. States concerned should, if they had not already done so, declare and uphold an immediate moratorium on the production of fissile material for such uses.

131. All States had a responsibility to prevent nuclear weapons from ever being used again, whether intentionally or due to miscalculations. Implementing concrete risk reduction measures, enhancing transparency, and reducing the role of nuclear weapons in doctrines and policies would increase security, predictability and confidence, decrease tensions, and enhance opportunities for further progress on disarmament. Risk reduction measures, while crucial, were not a substitute for disarmament.

132. Sweden strongly encouraged more States to engage in progress on nuclear disarmament verification, which it considered a top priority. Her Government was actively involved in the International Partnership for Nuclear Disarmament Verification and the Quad Nuclear Verification Partnership.

133. The previous year, some progress had been made on nuclear arms control and in the dialogue among the five permanent members of the United Nations Security Council, an important platform for the implementation of the Non-Proliferation Treaty. Her delegation urged the nuclear-weapon States to deepen that dialogue and engage with non-nuclear-weapon States, and called on all to engage constructively and refrain from actions that contradicted the object and purpose of the Treaty.

134. **Prince Saud Bin Bader Bin Saud Al-Saud** (Saudi Arabia) said that it was imperative to strike an appropriate balance among the three pillars of the Non-Proliferation Treaty, avoiding an undue focus on a given pillar at the expense of the other two. All States should accede to instruments and participate in initiatives aimed at the total elimination of nuclear weapons. To that end, States must cooperate, pursue development efforts and work to prevent an arms race

and the eruption of conflicts in which internationally prohibited weapons might be used.

135. Saudi Arabia supported international efforts to empower women and youth and to achieve gender balance in the area of disarmament employment. His country had taken practical steps to that end, selecting distinguished candidates for international posts and training programmes on disarmament. He also hoped that the Conference on Disarmament, the single multilateral disarmament negotiating forum, would overcome its stalemate and adopt a comprehensive and balanced programme of work.

*Statements made in exercise of the right of reply*

136. **Mr. Gómez Robledo Verduzco** (Mexico) said that his delegation was forced to respond to the remarks made by the representatives of Belgium and France. First, the Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons was fully compatible with the Non-Proliferation Treaty in both letter and spirit and did not in any way undermine or weaken that instrument. Second, the Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons strengthened the Non-Proliferation Treaty and contributed to the fulfilment of obligations under article VI of that Treaty, as did the establishment of nuclear-weapon-free zones, in line with article VII of the Non-Proliferation Treaty. Moreover, having legitimate security concerns was in no way a privilege restricted to nuclear-weapon States. If non-nuclear-weapon States were required to wait until the five nuclear-weapon States, in their infinite wisdom and benevolence, decided the time had come to proceed with disarmament, all others would have to resign themselves to living under the threat of annihilation until a nuclear-weapon State finally determined that a particular extreme set of circumstances had justified the use of a nuclear weapon and used such a weapon under the pretext of legitimate defence. In such a scenario, the few survivors of the resulting catastrophe would envy the dead their fate. Third, the five nuclear-weapon States did not have a monopoly on the truth, much less any veto power within the framework of the Non-Proliferation Treaty. The International Court of Justice had underscored that negotiations leading to nuclear disarmament were not the sole province of nuclear Powers. Fourth, preventing the catastrophic consequences, especially the humanitarian consequences, of nuclear weapons, and ensuring the full implementation of the nuclear non-proliferation and nuclear disarmament regimes were in the national interest of his country. Mexico would not accept an implementation of article VI of the Non-Proliferation Treaty that consisted of mere cosmetic measures. To

conclude, the Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons reflected the will of a third of the States Members of the United Nations, a proportion that was steadily rising, to implement the Non-Proliferation Treaty and move towards the goal of a world free of nuclear weapons.

137. **Mr. Ding Tongbing** (China) said that his delegation unequivocally rejected the baseless accusations against China by the representative of the United States. That country's delegation should remember that while pointing one finger at China, it was pointing four fingers back at itself. Its accusations would not change the simple fact that as a nuclear super-Power, the enormous nuclear arsenal of the United States continued to threaten global and regional security. That country had also adopted a series of negative policies and actions, systematically undermining strategic balance and stability at the global and regional levels. Several examples were worth noting. First, in contravention of campaign promises made by President Biden, the United States Government was clearly continuing its policy of first use of nuclear weapons, a position which ran counter to the expectations of the international community. Second, the United States had invested trillions of dollars in upgrading its nuclear triad by developing new types of nuclear weapons, including low-yield weapons and alternative modes of weapons delivery, thus lowering the threshold for using such weapons. Third, the United States was developing global anti-missile systems and deploying land-based interception systems in Europe and the Asia Pacific region, undermining regional and global strategic balance and stability. Fourth, the United States had yet to ratify protocols to the South Pacific Nuclear Free Zone Treaty (Treaty of Rarotonga), the Treaty on a Nuclear-Weapon-Free Zone in Central Asia (Treaty of Semipalatinsk) and the African Nuclear-Weapon-Free Zone Treaty (Treaty of Pelindaba). Fifth, the United States was deploying nuclear weapons overseas to extend so-called "nuclear deterrence", and sharing weapons-grade nuclear propulsion systems-equipped submarines with non-nuclear-weapon States, in order to continue along the path of confrontation based on a cold war mentality.

138. The accusations made by the United States against China would never change the simple fact that the self-defensive and highly responsible nuclear strategy of China was the most stable, consistent and predictable among the nuclear-weapon States. China limited its own nuclear capabilities to the minimum level required to protect its national security and had never taken part in any nuclear arms race, nor would it ever do so. China was firmly committed to the policy of no first use of

nuclear weapons at any time or under any circumstances, and had made explicit commitments not to use or threaten to use nuclear weapons against non-nuclear-weapon States or in nuclear-weapon-free zones. The nuclear weapons China possessed were solely intended to counter the use or threat of use of such weapons against it by other countries, thereby ensuring its strategic security. Any country that was not planning to use nuclear weapons against China should not view China's weapons as a threat or feel threatened by them.

139. He advised the United States delegation that their country could not assert or bolster its own innocence by levelling smears and accusations against China, and urged the United States to concretely shoulder its special responsibility for nuclear disarmament in line with international consensus and to commit to a substantial and substantive reduction of its nuclear arsenal in a verifiable, irreversible and legally binding manner. Only by so doing could the United States restore the trust of the international community.

140. With regard to the accusation by the United States that China had refused to engage in strategic dialogue, China had established bilateral arms control dialogue mechanisms with countries throughout the world, and had also held such dialogues with the United States. However, on the one hand, the United States had defined the strategic relationship with China as one of competition, resorted to a variety of unscrupulous measures to suppress and provoke China, and continuously infringed on the sovereignty, security and territorial integrity of China. On the other hand, the United States also sought to use arms control dialogue with China to install a so-called "crisis control guardrail", a logically-untenable approach that conflated cause and effect. Dialogue on arms control did not happen in a vacuum and could not be achieved without considering the overall framework of the relationship between the two countries. The United States should change its course, adhere to the principles of mutual respect, peaceful coexistence and win-win cooperation in developing productive dialogue with China, and take practical actions to create the necessary conditions and a favourable atmosphere to that end. Regarding talks on arms control, the United States should refrain from levelling baseless accusations and smears against China in total disregard of the facts.

*The meeting rose at 6 p.m.*