

# Preparatory Committee for the 2026 Review Conference of the Parties to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons

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### Security assurances

#### Working paper submitted by China

1. It is in the common interest of all humanity to rid the world of nuclear weapons and the threat of nuclear war and to ultimately achieve the complete prohibition and thorough destruction of nuclear weapons. China has unequivocally undertaken not to be the first to use nuclear weapons at any time or under any circumstances and has unconditionally pledged not to use or threaten to use nuclear weapons against non-nuclear-weapon States or nuclear-weapon-free zones. China also maintains that, pending the complete prohibition and thorough destruction of nuclear weapons, all nuclear-weapon States should unconditionally undertake not to use or threaten to use nuclear weapons against non-nuclear-weapon States or nuclear-weapon-free zones.

2. The majority of non-nuclear-weapon States parties to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons have long held that, pending the total elimination of nuclear weapons, it is the legitimate right of non-nuclear-weapon States to receive legally binding security assurances from nuclear-weapon States against the use or threat of use of nuclear weapons under any circumstances.

The General Assembly, in the Final Document of its first special session devoted to disarmament, held in 1978, urged the nuclear-weapon States to “pursue efforts to conclude, as appropriate, effective arrangements to assure non-nuclear-weapon States against the use or threat of use of nuclear weapons”.

The Final Document of the 2000 Review Conference of the Parties to the Non-Proliferation Treaty states that “legally binding security assurances by the five nuclear-weapon States to the non-nuclear-weapon States ... strengthen the nuclear non-proliferation regime”.

The Final Document of the 2010 Review Conference of the Parties to the Non-Proliferation Treaty notes the decision by the participants that “the Conference on Disarmament should, within the context of an agreed, comprehensive and balanced programme of work, immediately begin discussion of effective international arrangements to assure non-nuclear-weapon States against the use or threat of use of nuclear weapons” and should “discuss substantively, without limitation, with a view to elaborating recommendations dealing with all aspects of this issue, not excluding an internationally legally binding instrument”.



3. Nuclear-weapon States have provided security assurances to non-nuclear-weapon States through such means as United Nations Security Council resolutions, unilateral statements and the signature and ratification of protocols to nuclear-weapon-free zone treaties, but in most cases have done so with conditions attached. Nuclear-weapon-free zones do not cover all regions or all non-nuclear-weapon States. For example, practical obstacles have hindered the establishment of a nuclear-weapon-free zone in the Middle East.

4. The provision by nuclear-weapon States of legally binding security assurances to non-nuclear-weapon States will help to maintain global strategic stability, reduce strategic risks, strengthen the international nuclear non-proliferation regime, advance the nuclear disarmament process and ultimately promote the complete prohibition and thorough destruction of nuclear weapons. In the new security situation, the issue of providing negative security assurances to non-nuclear-weapon States has taken on renewed importance and urgency and should be given priority in the current review cycle.

5. During the Non-Proliferation Treaty review process, many States have considered that the existence of “nuclear sharing” and “extended deterrence” arrangements has reduced the political will of States participating in such arrangements to establish nuclear-weapon-free zones or conclude an international legal instrument on security assurances. Many States are highly concerned about the role of non-nuclear-weapon States participating in these arrangements in the deployment and use of nuclear weapons and in decision-making in that regard.

6. For the reasons outlined above, China strongly calls for the conclusion, as soon as possible, of an international legal instrument to provide assurances to non-nuclear-weapon States and nuclear-weapon-free zones against the use or threat of use of nuclear weapons. To this end, China proposes that the following issues be discussed in depth at the eleventh Review Conference and in Preparatory Committee meetings with a view to reaching a consensus for inclusion in the final document:

(a) The Conference on Disarmament should begin substantive work as soon as possible on the conclusion of an international legal instrument to provide assurances to non-nuclear-weapon States and nuclear-weapon-free zones against the use or threat of use of nuclear weapons.

(b) Pending the completion of negotiations on such an international legal instrument, all nuclear-weapon States should publicly announce that they unconditionally undertake not to use or threaten to use nuclear weapons against non-nuclear-weapon States or nuclear-weapon-free zones.

(c) Nuclear-weapon States should support efforts to establish nuclear-weapon-free zones, respect the legal status of nuclear-weapon-free zones, sign and ratify the relevant protocols to nuclear-weapon-free zone treaties and take concrete measures to implement relevant security assurances. Both nuclear-weapon States and non-nuclear-weapon States should refrain from actions that disregard or undermine the status of nuclear-weapon-free zones.

(d) Nuclear-weapon States should reduce the role of nuclear weapons in their national security policies, abandon the policy of nuclear deterrence based on the first use of nuclear weapons, refrain from developing tailored nuclear deterrence policies against other countries and from designating any country as a target of nuclear strikes, lower their nuclear alert status and refrain from aiming nuclear weapons under their control at any country.

(e) The relevant nuclear-weapon State should abolish “nuclear sharing” and “extended deterrence” arrangements and withdraw all nuclear weapons deployed abroad to its own territory. Pending the achievement of this objective, the relevant

nuclear-weapon States and non-nuclear-weapon States should show transparency regarding such arrangements and clarify whether they contravene those States' obligations under articles I and II of the Non-Proliferation Treaty. At the same time, as part of the negotiation of an international legal instrument on security assurances, the international community should discuss in depth the rights and obligations of non-nuclear-weapon States participating in nuclear sharing and extended deterrence arrangements.

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