STATEMENT BY

H.E. AMBASSADOR HASMY AGAM
PERMANENT REPRESENTATIVE OF MALAYSIA
TO THE UNITED NATIONS

AT

THE FIRST SESSION OF THE PREPARATORY COMMITTEE
FOR THE REVIEW CONFERENCE OF THE STATE PARTIES
TO THE TREATY ON THE NON-PROLIFERATION OF
NUCLEAR WEAPONS

MONDAY, 8 APRIL 2002

(Please check against delivery)
Mr. Chairman,

My delegation congratulates you on your election as Chairman of this First Preparatory Committee meeting for the 2005 Review Conference of the NPT. We attach great importance to this session of the Preparatory Committee as it would lay the foundation for a successful Review Conference three years from now. My delegation will extend its fullest co-operation to you in your efforts to ensure a successful outcome of this meeting.

2. My delegation associates itself with the statement by the distinguished Permanent Representative of Indonesia delivered earlier on behalf of the Non-Aligned Movement States Parties to the Treaty.

Mr. Chairman,

3. Two years ago at the 2000 Review Conference, States Parties to the Treaty agreed to a 13 points action plan for the systematic and progressive commitments towards nuclear disarmament. The States Parties further reaffirmed, with a view to improving the effectiveness of the strengthened review process, that the first two preparatory committee sessions would consider principles, objectives and ways of promoting the full implementation of the Treaty, as well as its universality, and to make the recommendations thereon to the review conference. It is the expectation of my delegation that at this preparatory committee meeting, the nuclear weapon states parties to the Treaty will substantiate their unequivocal commitments to eliminate their nuclear arsenals. Unless we see hard evidence of this in good faith, their pledges will remain mere platitudes, thereby further undermining the non-proliferation regime.

4. Recent events on the disarmament front have placed a heavy strain on the viability of the Treaty. The recently released Nuclear Posture Review (NPR) by one of the Treaty nuclear weapon states would seriously undermine the consensus achieved in 2000 and place the Treaty in jeopardy. The NPR challenged the very basis of the global efforts towards the reduction and elimination of nuclear weapons. Instead of meeting the unequivocal commitments agreed two years ago, the NPR is perceived as a rejection of most of the agreed 13 steps. Instead of propagating the principle of irreversibility, it advocates the retention and redeployment of many withdrawn warheads, as part of the so-called "responsive force" of nuclear weaponry. It also rejects the Comprehensive Nuclear Test Ban Treaty (CTBT) and further endorses a higher level of readiness for nuclear testing with the intention of allowing for the development of new nuclear weapon systems. It also supports the ongoing research on low-yielding nuclear warheads and targeting techniques that would penetrate deeply buried targets. This initiative will herald for the first time the actual use of nuclear weaponry in military operations since Hiroshima and Nagasaki, with all the political and security repercussions that might entail. At the same time, we also observe, with regret, that the existing modality to negotiate and implement nuclear disarmament is being sidelined by the nuclear weapon states.
5. It is a matter of deep regret to my delegation that in spite of strong criticism by the international community, the doctrine of nuclear deterrence continues to hold sway in the strategic thinking of the nuclear weapons states at a time when every effort should have been directed towards the reduction and elimination of these weapons of mass destruction, thereby raising question on their real commitment to nuclear disarmament.

6. All these developments constitute serious setbacks to the goals of the NPT. We would therefore urge all nuclear weapon States, Parties to the Treaty, not to renege on their undertakings made two years ago as that would deal a serious blow to the viability of the Treaty and to the disarmament process in general. Malaysia had serious reservations on the indefinite extension of the NPT in 1995. We believed then, and had warned, that an indefinite extension would give a "carte blanche" to the nuclear weapon States to continue to keep these weapons indefinitely. Recent developments have only strengthened our misgiving and have dealt a serious blow to the goal of securing the universality of the Treaty—which now seems more remote than ever before. It is indeed regrettable that self-serving national interests of the nuclear-weapon States parties have taken control of the NPT process, at the expense of the larger interests of the international community that had placed their entire faith on the good intentions of the nuclear-weapon States when they overwhelmingly supported that process in good faith. It is, therefore, imperative to ensure that there will be no weakening of support for the NPT as the consequences of that would be dire indeed; it could well lead to the unraveling of a regime that had served the international community well over three decades.

Mr. Chairman,

7. Despite all these setbacks, Malaysia reiterates its commitment to pursue its long-term goal towards the total elimination of all nuclear weapons and underscore the importance of the multilateral approach towards disarmament. We strongly believe that the search for genuine measures for disarmament and non-proliferation, in particular in the area of nuclear disarmament, remains a high priority on the international agenda. In this context, we continued to introduce for the sixth consecutive year, a resolution on the ICJ Advisory Opinion on the legality of the use and threat of nuclear weapons at the 56th Session of the General Assembly, which was supported by the overwhelming majority of member States. The resolution, inter-alia, continued to underscore the unanimous opinion of the Court that there exists an obligation to pursue in good faith and bring to a conclusion negotiations leading to nuclear disarmament in all its aspects under strict and effective international control. Resolution 56/24S also contained two new elements to reflect the following:

- to underscore the importance of the positive unequivocal commitment of the nuclear weapon States made at the 2000 Review Conference of NPT, which we had hoped would provide the necessary impetus for all States, especially nuclear weapon States, to pursue the ultimate objective of nuclear disarmament; and
to stress the importance of strengthening all existing nuclear related disarmament, arms control and reduction measures. We had also hoped that this new paragraph would stress the need to address the weakening of existing nuclear disarmament treaties and the virtually complete standstill in negotiations on nuclear disarmament in both the bilateral and multilateral tracks.

The resolution was adopted by an overwhelming number of votes in support of it, as in previous years.

8. At the regional level, Malaysia continues to work actively with the Association of South-East Asian Nations (ASEAN) to strengthen the South-East Asia Nuclear Weapon Free Zone (SEANWFZ). It is our hope that SEANWFZ would create conditions conducive to peace and stability and to promote regional confidence building in the region. The establishment of SEANWFZ is also a reflection of the genuine commitment of the States of South-East Asia towards achieving their common disarmament goal. At present, we are working closely with our ASEAN neighbours in our common pursuit to encourage nuclear weapon States to accede to the Treaty at an early date. My delegation also strongly supports the establishment of nuclear-weapon free zones in other regions of the world, particularly in volatile regions, such as the Middle East.

Mr. Chairman,

9. The 2005 Review Conference provides the opportunity for the States Parties, as well as the rest of the international community, to take stock of the implementation of the NPT and to take follow-up measures in support of the full implementation of the Treaty. As Member States of the United Nations, States Parties to the Treaty have the moral responsibility to follow up the resolve of their leaders at the Millennium Summit “to strive for the elimination of weapons of mass destruction, particularly nuclear weapons, and to keep all options open for achieving this aim, including the possibility of convening an international conference to identify ways of eliminating nuclear dangers”. The 2002 preparatory committee would give an indication on whether delegations, in particular those of the nuclear weapon states, will make good on the commitment of their leaders.

Thank you, Mr. Chairman.