STATEMENT

by H.E. Mr. Dejan Šahović, Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary Permanent Representative of the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia to the United Nations to the First Session of the Preparatory Committee Meeting for the 2005 NPT Review Conference of the Parties to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons

Mr. Chairman,

The Yugoslav delegation congratulates you most warmly on the election as Chairman of this Committee. We look forward to working with you and others to ensure that proper foundations are laid for a successful Review Conference three years from now. We are aware of the complexities involved in this process, but we are confident that under your chairmanship the process will be placed on a right track in the very beginning.

Mr. Chairman,

We share the view expressed by many previous speakers during this debate that multilateralism is the fundamental principle in the area of disarmament and non-proliferation. As a non-nuclear-weapon State, committed to the goal of elimination of nuclear, as well as all other types of weapons of mass destruction, the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia attaches great importance to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons. No doubt, the NPT is the most important international legal instrument in the field of non-proliferation. It was with that in mind that, on the basis of the Successor Statement of 29 August 2001, Yugoslavia became a party to the Treaty and assumed in a formal way its share of responsibility for the achievement of its objectives. In taking such a decision, the Yugoslav Government was guided by its commitment to peace and the strengthening of international security through cooperation and disarmament, nuclear disarmament, in particular. In our view, non-proliferation and nuclear disarmament are the preconditions for long-lasting stability throughout the world.

Despite the fact that Yugoslavia did not participate in review processes in the period behind us, we share the views reflected in the consensus decisions reached at both the 1995 and 2000 NPT Conferences. In that regard, I would like to emphasize the crucial importance of a full implementation of those decisions. Specifically, I have in mind the 13 practical steps agreed within the Final Document of the 2000 Review Conference, as well as paragraphs 3 and 4 c) of the 1995 decision on “Principles and objectives for nuclear non-proliferation and disarmament”.

854 Fifth Avenue • New York, NY 10021 • T (212) 879 8700 • F (212) 879 8705
As we all know, the NPT is almost universally accepted. In some other fields such level of acceptance would probably be considered as a major achievement. However, we are dealing here with types of weapons that threaten the very existence of mankind. It is therefore important to stress the urgent need for the universality of the Treaty for which additional, albeit significant efforts are necessary to achieve.

The debate in the past two days, Mr. Chairman, has shown once again that non-proliferation is closely connected with, and permeates many other aspects of nuclear disarmament. Committed to the process of nuclear disarmament as a whole, Yugoslavia signed the Comprehensive Test Ban Treaty in July 2001, which is expected to be ratified by the Yugoslav Parliament soon. It is the belief of my Government that its accession to the NPT and signature and ratification of the CTBT are important steps forward towards ensuring a universal implementation of those two major documents in the field of nuclear disarmament and non-proliferation. The entry into force of the CTBT, we also believe, would be a significant accomplishment in that regard.

While pursuing the vision of a world free of nuclear weapons, Yugoslavia has always believed that nuclear energy should be used for peaceful purposes under strict international control. In that connection, my country has complied with all its obligations under the Treaty and we are maintaining fruitful cooperation with the International Atomic Energy Agency. Bearing in mind the significance and the work of the Agency, it is very important to strengthen the IAEA safeguards system by signing its safeguards agreements and additional protocols. In that way, we would go a long way in preventing unauthorized and uncontrolled use of nuclear materials.

For, Mr. Chairman, one of the most overarching concerns facing the international community today is the threat that weapons of mass destruction, particularly nuclear weapons, be seized by terrorist individuals or groups. The indications of the existence of certain such challenges are telling evidence of the paramount importance of the Non-Proliferation Treaty. Unfortunately, Yugoslavia has had a long and painful experience with terrorism. We are therefore keenly aware of how important it is that resolute measures be taken both by individual countries and at regional and global levels to prevent any possibility of terrorist groups acquiring weapons of mass destruction. We are ready to make our contribution to these efforts, in particular in terms of cooperation in our region.

Mr. Chairman,

My country hopes and expects that the forthcoming Review Conference will make an important contribution to the strengthening of the non-proliferation regime, established by the Treaty. We are therefore ready as a non-nuclear weapon state with limited capabilities in this field to support the preparatory process that is beginning with the current session as much as we can.

However, this process, Mr. Chairman, and the implementation of the entire regime of non-proliferation and nuclear disarmament, as well as the vision of a world free of weapons of mass destruction, for that matter, cannot be achieved without a whole-hearted commitment of the nuclear-weapon States. They are expected to make an additional effort in this field in the interest of the strengthening of overall global security. For, after all, this is the only way to uphold the principles and achieve the goals contained in the Treaties on nuclear non-proliferation and disarmament.

Thank you.