Preparatory Committee for
the 2005 Review Conference of
the Parties to the Treaty on the
Non-proliferation of Nuclear Weapons.
First Session

STATEMENT

BY

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PERMANENT MISSION OF NORWAY
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Mr. Chairman,

I would like to join other speakers in congratulating you on your election as Chairman of the First Preparatory Committee for the 2005 Review Conference of the Parties to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons.

For the first time in 15 years the 2000 NPT Review Conference ended with the adoption with consensus of a Final Document. The Conference strengthened the review process. It identified 13 practical and wide-ranging steps for the systematic and progressive achievement of nuclear disarmament. We hope that all States Parties will contribute to making this new Review Cycle equally constructive. Norway for its part is fully committed to building on our achievements from the 2000 Review Conference.

The 11th of September 2001 dramatically changed the international agenda. Half a year ago, organized terrorists murdered thousands of innocent civilians, demonstrating to the world that they would not restrain themselves in any way. International terrorism must be fought through a broad range of measures. The United Nations General Assembly made several important decisions in the aftermath of 11th September. One of the resolutions that was adopted was a resolution concerning the need for further strengthening of multilateral arms control and non-proliferation regimes to combat international terrorism. Effective implementation and continued strengthening of these regimes must form an integral part of any future strategy. In this regard the NPT regime is of particular relevance.

Mr Chairman,

We must have a balanced approach to the tasks ahead of us. We must consider ways to ensure that all states accede to the NPT. We must make sure that all States Parties comply with the provisions and obligations under the Treaty. We must further refine international safeguard mechanisms.

Mr. Chairman,

We attach particular importance to the unequivocal undertaking made by the nuclear-weapons-states at the 2000 Review Conference to accomplish the total elimination of their nuclear arsenal under strict and effective international control. Article VI of the NPT entails a commitment by all States Parties to the pursuit of nuclear disarmament. The progress in the implementation of the 13 steps of the Action Program has been disappointingly slow. We have to recognize that on some of the 2000 NPT commitments we have been moving in the wrong direction.

The value of our non-proliferation efforts will be limited unless they are accompanied by progress in nuclear disarmament. The Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty (CTBT) is essential both in promoting nuclear disarmament and non-proliferation. Universal adherence to and the early entry into force of the CTBT continue to be a priority for Norway.
Self-imposed moratoria on nuclear testing are a useful measure pending the entry into force of the CTBT. The US has reaffirmed its commitment to the self-imposed moratorium on nuclear testing. Such moratoria cannot, however, replace the legally binding commitments represented by signing and ratification of the CTBT. It is of crucial importance that all states with nuclear capabilities ratify the Treaty. We welcome the ratification of the Treaty by the nuclear powers France, Russia and the United Kingdom. We urge China and the United States to follow suit.

The CTBTs verification system is at the core of the Treaty. Financial and diplomatic support to the Preparatory Commission of the Comprehensive-Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty Organization must continue unabated.

The last NPT Review Conference also called for the early entry into force and full implementation of START II and the early conclusion of START III, as well as preserving and maintaining the ABM Treaty. The present realities, however, are different. We should focus on substance, not on form. In this respect we welcome further reductions in strategic nuclear warheads and the continued bilateral dialogue between the US and Russia on a new strategic framework involving all significant aspects of their bilateral relationship. We see such reductions as an important contribution to the implementation of the decisions from the 2000 Review Conference and to continued strategic stability. We hope that the upcoming Summit between Presidents Bush and Putin in May will confirm agreement on these issues.

Norway welcomes the specific inclusion of tactical nuclear weapons in the Final Document of the 2000 Review Conference. Every effort should be made to also reduce these arsenals as well. This class of nuclear weapons remains outside any formalized arms control treaty. The principle of legally binding, verifiable, irreversible and transparent reductions should apply with equal force to all nuclear weapons, including tactical ones.

Increased transparency by nuclear weapon-states regarding their nuclear capabilities and the implementation of agreements pursuant to Article VI and as a voluntary confidence-building measure to support further progress on nuclear disarmament, is important. Reporting should not be considered as an option, but rather an obligation to promote transparency and hence confidence in the overall NPT regime. We need to explore ways on how to strengthen national reporting.

The Conference on Disarmament (CD) has a special role in the implementation of the 2000 Final Document. The lack of agreement on a Program of Work for the CD has hampered progress. Norway is deeply disappointed and worried by the standstill in the CD. The present stalemate is undercutting the credibility of the CD, and multilateralism in disarmament and arms control.

A Fissile Material Cut-Off Treaty (FMCT) is essential in order to advance nuclear non-proliferation. Negotiations on a non-discriminatory multilateral and effectively verifiable FMCT should start without further delay. The international community should explore ways to deal with the entire field of weapons-usable fissile material in a comprehensive manner. In addition to a ban on production, an international norm should be established for states dealing with weapons-usable fissile material.
Norway also supports the proposal that the CD should start working on nuclear disarmament and the Prevention of an Arms Race in Outer Space (PAROS).

We believe that the proposed Program of Work presented by Ambassador Amorim (CD 1624) provides the best basis for starting the substantial work of the CD. We are close to a solution, but we need to mobilize the political will to go the extra mile. Likewise we should be able to move ahead on discussions on negative security assurances.

Mr. Chairman,

Export control remains an important pillar for non-proliferation. We reaffirm our position that existing structures, such as the Zangger Committee and national export control mechanisms are vital to prevent nuclear proliferation. It is all our interests that these structures function smoothly. We are ready to discuss the matter of transparency with the understanding that the effectiveness of the existing structures must not be weakened.

The IAEA safeguard systems is an indispensable tool for promoting compliance and non-proliferation. Strengthening the effectiveness of the comprehensive IAEA safeguards system is an important contribution to these endeavours. The system must be kept under continued review, with the aim to reach further improvements. All States Parties, in particular those with substantial nuclear programs must be called upon to sign safeguard agreements, including the 1997 additional protocols, with the IAEA. We see a need for enhanced safeguard assistance to member states and for the implementation of the new integrated safeguards system. We look forward to an IAEA plan of action for increased safeguard assistance. We are ready, if necessary, to consider increased funding for such IAEA activities.

Norway is deeply concerned about the continued allegations of non-compliance with the NPT regime. In well-documented cases the IAEA must be able to consider, investigate, draw conclusions and decide on necessary action in accordance with its mandate. It is in the interest of concerned countries to cooperate fully with the IAEA.

Mr. Chairman,

Regional issues will be an important item at the Review Process. We agree that the situation in the Middle East must be addressed from a universalization as well as a compliance perspective. We must, however, ensure that other regional challenges, in particular South Asia, also become the subject of our concern and attention.

Mr. Chairman,

The threat of international terrorism has made it even more imperative to ensure sustainable progress in nuclear disarmament and non-proliferation. We have the opportunity to fulfill the ambitions set out in the 2000 Final Document. A balanced and constructive first PrepCom will demonstrate our commitment to make use of that opportunity.

I thank you.