Statement by Mr. Hira Bahadur Thapa, 
Minister-Counsellor 

at the 
First Session of the Preparatory Committee 
to the 
2005 Review Conference of the Treaty on the 
Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons 

New York, 9 April 2002
Mr. Chairman,

Let me congratulate you upon your unanimous election to the Chair of First Session of the Preparatory Committee for 2005 Review Conference of the Treaty on Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons. I assure you the fullest cooperation of my delegation.

My delegation also fully associates itself with the statement delivered yesterday by the distinguished representative of Indonesia on behalf of the Non-Aligned Movement.

Mr. Chairman,

I wish to make the following comments:

- Despite the euphoric environment generated by the successful 2000 Review Conference of the NPT that culminated, among other things, in the agreement of 13 practical steps to achieve nuclear disarmament, progress in this field is regrettably lacking. Moreover, there has been backsliding in nuclear disarmament since 2000 with some countries showing interest in recognizing the importance of nuclear weapons in maintaining security. Any effort seeking to expand the threshold of the use of nuclear weapons comes as a total disappointment to the international community.

- The long stalemate in the Conference on Disarmament resulting from disagreement among members to start negotiations on a Fissile Materials Cut-Off Treaty (FMCT) and the establishment of an Ad Hoc Committee on Nuclear Disarmament is a worryingly discouraging development.

- The Comprehensive Nuclear Test Ban Treaty (CTBT) has still not received the required ratification to come into effect. More efforts should be made to have forty-four countries ratify the treaty, without which the CTBT cannot be operationalized.

- Notwithstanding the above, there are some positive signs seen in the agreement of a nuclear weapon state to sign Additional Protocol for comprehensive IAEA safeguards. Furthermore, the international community looks forward to seeing a successful US-Russian Summit in May when the leaders of these countries will hopefully have struck a deal to reduce their nuclear warheads. We believe that constructive bilateral steps in arms control contribute positively to furthering multi-lateralism in nuclear disarmament.

- The maintenance of nuclear test moratorium by nuclear weapon states and nuclear capable states should continue. Concerted efforts need to be directed at discouraging nuclear weaponisation of the South Asian region, which unfortunately is not free of tensions, and nuclear weapons free zones.

Mr. Chairman,

The 2005 Review Conference of the NPT is certainly going to be a test case to see if the nuclear weapon states live by their commitments as reflected in the Final Document of the 2000 Conference. We feel encouraged that the first session of the PrepCom of NPT Review Conference is taking place under the strengthened review process as agreed earlier. It is our conviction that specific time be allotted to important issues. In this regard, we favour the allocation of such specific time to nuclear disarmament and the resolution on the Middle East. We also emphasize the point that the preparatory session should also devote its time to a comprehensive discussion of all relevant issues including the regional issue of South Asia and elsewhere, where concerns for nuclear proliferation are too serious to be ignored.

I thank you, Mr. Chairman.