Statement by H.E. Ambassador Hu Xiaodi, Head of the Chinese Delegation, On Security Assurances for Non-Nuclear-Weapon States

Mr. Chairman,

The question of security assurances for non-nuclear-weapon states has been there for decades. Even before the NPT was concluded, non-nuclear-weapon states had requested security assurances from nuclear-weapon states. In order to enhance the NPT's universality, the UN Security Council adopted Resolution 225, in which nuclear-weapon states committed explicitly to providing positive security assurances to non-nuclear-weapon states, thus resolving some of their concerns. In 1995, State Parties to the NPT decided to extend the Treaty indefinitely and Security Council adopted Resolution 984, providing positive and negative security assurances for non-nuclear-weapon states. Nuclear-weapon states have also provided security assurances to states parties to nuclear-weapon-free zone treaties through signing the relevant treaty protocols. Nonetheless, no progress has been made in concluding a legally-binding international instrument, on unconditional security assurances.

It must be pointed out that security assurances is a right that the non-nuclear-weapon states are entitled to. It is legitimate and reasonable for non-nuclear-weapon states to claim assurances that they be free from threat of nuclear weapons while giving up the nuclear weapon option, and that such assurances be affirmed in a legally-binding form.
Security assurances for non-nuclear-weapon states are not one-way benefit. By undertaking not to develop nuclear weapons, non-nuclear-weapon states make a contribution to international nuclear non-proliferation and disarmament efforts and to world peace and stability. Security assurances for non-nuclear-weapon states will enhance their sense of security; hence they reduce their motivation to develop nuclear weapons and are positive for non-proliferation and the three objectives of the NPT.

The fundamental way to address the question of security assurances for non-nuclear-weapon states is the complete prohibition and thorough destruction of nuclear weapons and freeing the whole world from the threat and shadow of nuclear weapons. Pending realization of this objective, all nuclear-weapon states should undertake not to be the first to use nuclear weapons, or use or threaten to use nuclear weapons against non-nuclear-weapons states or nuclear-weapon-free zones. International legal instruments should be concluded thereupon as soon as possible.

Gradually degrading the role of nuclear weapons in national security, listing no state as target of nuclear weapons, and making no nuclear weapon strike plan against non-nuclear-weapon states will contribute to progress on security assurances for non-nuclear-weapon states. We regret the retrogression of certain country's position on security assurances, since it will do no good to international non-proliferation and nuclear disarmament process.

Since it came into possession of nuclear weapons, China has declared that at no time or under no circumstances will China be the first to use nuclear
weapons, or use or threaten to use nuclear weapons against non-nuclear-weapon states or nuclear-weapon-free zones. In 1995, the Chinese Government reaffirmed once again its position and undertaken to provide positive security assurances for non-nuclear-weapon states. China and Russia, China and the United States declared that they would not aim nuclear weapons at each other. China and Russia concluded an agreement on mutual no-first-use of nuclear weapons. China initiated that nuclear-weapon states should conclude a treaty on no-first-use of nuclear weapons and undertake unconditionally not to use nuclear weapons against non-nuclear-weapon states. China actively supports the Conference of Disarmament in Geneva to re-establish an ad hoc committee on negative security assurances and start without delay substantive work and negotiations. China also supports the negotiation of a protocol on security assurances for non-nuclear-weapon states within the NPT framework.

China has signed all relevant non-nuclear-weapon treaty protocols that are open to signature, and undertaken corresponding obligations. China and ASEAN have reached agreement on Southeast Asia Nuclear-Weapon-Free Zone Treaty and its Protocol. We are waiting to the protocol to be open to signature. China has no difficulty with the Central Asian Nuclear-Weapon-Free Zone Treaty and Protocol that are under negotiation, and is waiting for the consensus between the five central Asian countries and the other nuclear-weapon states.

In accordance with the Final Document of the 2000 NPT Review Conference, the Preparatory Committee should put forward recommendations to the Review Conference on security assurances for non-nuclear-weapon states. In order to make progress in this area, China agrees
to establish specialized organs and allocate special time in this session of the Preparatory Committee and the Review Conference next year to discuss the issue.

The Chinese Delegation has submitted a working paper on Security Assurances for non-nuclear-weapon states and hopes that the relevant elements will be included in the recommendations to be submitted to 2005 NPT Review Conference. China's fact sheets on nuclear disarmament and reduction of the danger of nuclear war also cover measures taken by the Chinese side on security assurances for non-nuclear-weapon states.

Thank you, Mr. Chairman