1st Session of the Preparatory Committee for the 2010 Review Conference of the States Parties to the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty (NPT)

(Peaceful use of nuclear energy)

Statement by

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Mr President,

For a number of years, an increasing number of states have made electricity generation from nuclear energy an objective as a result of the ever-growing demand for electricity and the imperatives due to climatic change.

In Switzerland, where approximately 40% of the electricity consumed is generated by nuclear power, we are also considering the replacement of our existing nuclear power facilities in the coming decades.

Mr President,

If the prospect of an increase in the use of nuclear power raises fears of a parallel increase in the risk of nuclear proliferation, my delegation would like to recall that, over the past 15 years, the States Parties to the NPT have taken a number of initiatives and developed various instruments to strengthen confidence in the peaceful use of nuclear energy.

In this regard, we cite the following:

- the reinforcement of the application of the general safeguards;
- the introduction of full-scope safeguards as a condition of supply in the "Principles and objectives for non-proliferation and nuclear disarmament" adopted in the 1995 indefinite extension of the NPT;
- the adoption of the Additional Protocol.

In addition to these measures, there are a number of instruments which were subsequently developed in the context of the debate on the peaceful use of nuclear energy. These include:

- the Convention on Nuclear Safety;
- the Code of Conduct on the safety and security of radioactive sources.

These measures and instruments have built up confidence between the States Parties, and my country encourages all States Parties to the NPT to accede to all these instruments.

Discussions have continued on the question of addressing concerns about proliferation while meeting the demand for the peaceful use of nuclear energy. We recall the report on Multilateral Nuclear Approaches (MNAs) - presented in 2005 by a group of experts set up by
I, the IAEA Director-General - and contained in the document INFCIRC/640.

Since the 2005 NPT Review Conference, the discussions on the internationalisation of the nuclear fuel cycle have gained momentum and have taken new directions. Among them my delegation wishes to highlight the following:

- the US proposal of a "Global Nuclear Energy Partnership" (GNEP), which was launched in January 2006 by President Bush;

- the proposal by Russia to create a network of nuclear fuel enrichment and reprocessing centres under international control, known as the "Global Nuclear Power Infrastructure" (GNPI), which was presented by President Putin also in January 2006;

- the proposal entitled "Concept for a Multilateral Mechanism for Reliable Access to Nuclear Fuel", which was presented in May 2006 by Germany, the USA, France, the Netherlands, the UK and Russia, and which is mentioned in document GOV/INF/2006/10;

- the proposal to promote multilateralism in the context of the nuclear fuel cycle - which was presented to the opening session of this meeting by the Austrian Foreign Minister - and mentioned in document NPT/CONF.2010/PC.1/7;

- the proposal to create a centre for uranium enrichment under the control of the IAEA, which was presented on 2 May 2007 by the German Foreign Minister.

In view of the next meeting of the IAEA Board of Governors, the Secretariat of the IAEA will prepare a paper containing all the proposals submitted on the question of access to the nuclear fuel cycle. We hope that this paper will provide a better overview of the scope and the details of the proposed ideas, and will help the future debate.

Mr President,

As you see, the discussion on access to the nuclear fuel cycle is not new; in fact it began practically at the beginning of the 'nuclear age'. Although the five proposals presented in 2006, and briefly mentioned above, were all, in varying degrees, the object of unsuccessful initiatives in the 1970s, they have succeeded in relaunching the debate on a problem that is becoming increasingly important.

For its part, Switzerland would like to present the elements constituting the basis of our position in the debate on access to the nuclear fuel cycle:

1. Switzerland gives paramount importance to the inalienable right to develop research, production and use of nuclear energy for peaceful purposes as contained in Article IV of
the NPT;

2. Parallel to this, Switzerland accords equally high importance to security and safety in the context of the peaceful use of nuclear energy;

3. Switzerland is aware that certain sensitive areas of the nuclear fuel cycle, such as enrichment and reprocessing, require special attention;

4. Switzerland considers that all discussions on the procedures for restricting access to sensitive nuclear technologies must be based on the NPT and must take into account the link between Article IV and Articles I, II and III. Consequently, Switzerland considers that a State’s access to sensitive nuclear technologies must be conditional upon its adherence to the NPT and its compliance with all the provisions of the Treaty.

5. Switzerland therefore rejects proposals which aim to restrict access to sensitive nuclear technologies for non-nuclear weapons states not in possession of such technologies. It believes that proposals of this kind would unjustifiably discriminate against these States.

Mr President, thank you for your attention.