STATEMENT ON SPECIFIC ISSUES:
NUCLEAR DISARMAMENT AND SECURITY ASSURANCES
BY AMBASSADOR HAMIDON ALI
HEAD OF THE DELEGATION OF MALAYSIA TO THE
SECOND PREPARATORY COMMITTEE FOR
THE 2010 REVIEW CONFERENCE OF THE PARTIES TO
THE TREATY ON THE NON-PROLIFERATION OF
NUCLEAR WEAPONS IN
GENEVA, 2 MAY 2008

Mr. Chairman,

At the outset, my delegation associates itself with the statement of NAM States Parties to the NPT, delivered by Indonesia.

Mr. Chairman,

Nuclear disarmament remains the highest priority for my delegation. Forty years have passed and despite the slow progress made throughout the years, sadly we must acknowledge that it has been our collective failure to advance the nuclear disarmament agenda as envisaged by the architects of the NPT. Some may argue that this failure can be dated back to the last ten years or so, marked ominously with the start of the impasse at the Conference on Disarmament. While others may argue that this failure, honestly, is the sad state of affairs of the NPT itself, since the day of its birth, where until today Nuclear Weapon States have failed to uphold their commitments on nuclear disarmament as well as to assure Non-Nuclear Weapon States against the use or threat of use of nuclear weapons.

2. Like other delegations who spoke before me, we can all agree that we need to strengthen the NPT as it is the cornerstone of the nuclear disarmament and non-proliferation regime. If not for the NPT entering into force four decades ago, the world we live in today would look vastly different. There should not be any debate on the prerogative of nuclear disarmament versus nuclear non-proliferation. It is a false division; both objectives are inter-related and mutually reinforcing. The balance between the two is a critical component of the NPT.

3. We should always remind ourselves of the grand bargain struck between the Nuclear Weapons States and the Non-Nuclear Weapons States, without which the NPT would not have come into being. In the 1995 NPT Review and Extension Conference, we the States Parties reaffirmed this grand bargain, that states which did not possess nuclear weapons as of 1967 agreed not to obtain them, and states that did possess them agreed to divest themselves of these weapons over time. It is reassuring that an overwhelming number of members of the international community have foreseen the options of developing, acquiring and possessing nuclear weapons, by acceding to the Treaty as Non-Nuclear Weapons States.

4. Sadly, we see that in today’s reality, the emphasis is more on non-proliferation, rather than disarmament. The NPT PrepCom in Vienna last year heard concerns by Nuclear Weapon States on non-proliferation non-compliance, ignoring the equal concern of disarmament non-compliance on their part. It truly confounds our imagination when certain Nuclear Weapons States are purposely transferring nuclear technologies, materials and knowledge to non-NPT States that possess nuclear weapons, which can be diverted to the production of nuclear weapons. This action only heightens the sense of insecurity on the part of Non-Nuclear Weapons States. Among some, this begs the unavoidable question of
what is the relevance of the NPT regime, particularly when certain Nuclear Weapons States have blatantly and without qualms violated the spirit and letter of the Treaty.

5. It is important that due regard is given to Article VI of the NPT, which unambiguously underlines the obligation for States Parties to pursue unconditional nuclear disarmament. It would be unfathomable that leaders in the past would agree to the establishment of a system that perpetuates the existence of an exclusive club of states which possesses nuclear weapons, which clearly is discriminatory against the interests of countries that have foresworn nuclear weapons. But the shocking reality of today is that there is an exclusive club of states which possesses nuclear weapons. More disturbingly, while its formal membership may have not grown, others have found the “necessary credentials” to establish itself on its own, outside this exclusive club. This “club” is not merely discriminatory; but can be likened to nuclear apartheid. Where is the grand bargain? One could question, whether there was ever a bargain in the first place?

Mr. Chairman,

6. The International Court of Justice in 1996 issued its advisory opinion that there exists an obligation to pursue in good faith and bring to conclusion negotiations leading to nuclear disarmament in all its aspects under strict and effective international control. Since then, Malaysia has annually introduced a draft resolution on the ICJ Advisory Opinion on the Legality of the Threat or Use of Nuclear Weapons at the General Assembly First Committee, urging delegations to support the commencement of negotiations towards the conclusion of a Nuclear Weapons Convention.

7. My delegation continues to believe that only through the elimination of nuclear weapons, can we stem the tide of nuclear proliferation. Inversely, it is the inability of the Nuclear Weapons States to disarm their arsenals, as well as to decrease their reliance on nuclear weapons in their security policies, which has contributed to the growing arc of proliferation threats.

8. Now is the time for Nuclear Weapon States to prove their commitment and support such a movement towards a Nuclear Weapons Convention. If Nuclear Weapon States continue in their current course, it will be difficult, if not impossible to move from the status quo into a situation that the world urgently requires. Its outcome would not be the further progress in the disarmament and non-proliferation agenda, but a hindrance, or worse - a step backwards. This would further derail the NPT from its true path.

Mr. Chairman,

9. The 2010 NPT Review Conference must address the issue of compliance to the treaty, and this must be in the context of advancing the nuclear disarmament agenda. Given the devastating impact of nuclear weapons on mankind, the end solution is only one - the complete and total elimination of nuclear weapons. There is no other recourse, if we want to maintain and strengthen the NPT.

Mr. Chairman,

10. On the issue of security assurances, my delegation wishes to reiterate, as we mentioned in the previous statement at the General Debate, that Malaysia had ratified on 11 October 1996 the Treaty on the South-East Asia Nuclear Weapons Free Zone (SEANWFZ), together with other countries in South East Asia. In this regard Malaysia urges the Nuclear Weapons States to become party to the Protocol to the Treaty at the earliest opportunity.

11. The accession by Nuclear Weapons States to the Protocol would effectively accord a negative security assurance to SEANWFZ States Parties. These undertakings would provide assurance on the peaceful intent of nuclear weapons states that they will not attack non-
nuclear weapons states with their nuclear arsenal, of which their destructive force exceeds the atomic bombs that obliterated Hiroshima and Nagasaki. This is not a concern solely of Non-Nuclear Weapons States in South East Asia, it is important to all regions.

12. Effective international arrangements to protect Non-Nuclear Weapons States against the use or threats of use of nuclear weapons, such as through NWFZs would not only strengthen international peace and security, but would also positively contribute to the non-proliferation of nuclear weapons. We remain convinced that the possession of nuclear weapons by some states only serves to fuel the desire in other states to acquire and possess such weapons themselves. This is a reaction towards the perception of threats posed by nuclear weapons.

13. This situation can be further exacerbated with the possible risk of international terrorism, where a possibility exists in which non-state actors may acquire nuclear weapons or nuclear materials itself. In addressing this challenge, a potentially unnerving international security situation, it is vital for Nuclear Weapon States to demonstrate their full commitment to nuclear disarmament, in order to prevent the threat posed by the proliferation of weapons of mass destruction which would cause the potential decline of international confidence in existing International arms control regimes, in particular the NPT regime.

14. The Security Council itself through Resolution 984 of 11 April 1995 recognized the right of Non-Nuclear Weapons States to receive security assurances. In this regard, we should commence negotiations to reach agreement on effective arrangements to assure Non-Nuclear Weapons States against the use or threat of use of nuclear weapons. These arrangements could take the form of an internationally legally-binding instrument. This would address the insecurity of Non-Nuclear Weapons States, and they will not resort to the dangerous path of nuclear proliferation.

Mr. Chairman,

15. If we fail to react and engage with such realities now, the horrors of the past, of Hiroshima and Nagasaki, will come to haunt us in the future. We will all continue to have nightmares about the perpetual existence of nuclear weapons and its devastating effects. Humanity has called for the total elimination of nuclear weapons. It is our task to address this challenge, to take care of our concerns, to allay our fears and remove once and for all our haunting nightmares.

Thank you, Mr. Chairman.