Statement by Canada

First Session of the Preparatory Committee for the 2015 Review Conference of the Parties to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons

Vienna, Austria, May 2012

Cluster III: Strengthening the Review Process of the NPT

I wish to thank the PrepCom Chair for including in the agenda a session under cluster III dedicated to discussing the issue of strengthening the NPT’s review process. This remains an important element of discussions related to the Treaty. This is a topic on which Canada has sought action during the 2005 and 2010 review cycles. Our initiatives focused on two elements related to the NPT’s review process: first, ways to improve the NPT’s responsiveness and governance through institutional strengthening and, second, ways to increase accountability by States Parties through regular reports.

Canada has tabled a number of working papers on the subject of strengthening the NPT’s review process, most recently our 2010 RevCon working paper that was co-sponsored by 25 States Parties.

Canada continues to believe that there is a need to advance the principle of “permanence with accountability” that underpinned the decision on strengthening the review process when the Treaty was indefinitely extended in 1995. We believe that there remains a strong core of support among States Parties for taking action to strengthen the NPT’s review process. However, we also recognize that there remains some reluctance to devoting limited time and resources to such an issue when there are other challenges and priorities to address. Canada will therefore continue to consult with States Parties during the PrepCom to seek views about how best to strengthen governance and accountability in the NPT. On the basis of these consultations, we intend to determine how to take this issue forward.

Another way that all States Parties can contribute to strengthening of the NPT’s review process is through regular reporting. As emphasized in the NPD1’s working paper on transparency in nuclear weapons, all States Parties, both Nuclear- and Non-Nuclear Weapon States, have committed to reporting in Step 12 of the 13 Practical Steps in 2000 and actions 20 and 21 in the 2010 Action Plan.

In Canada’s view, reports that focus exclusively on disarmament, pursuant to article VI paragraph 4 (c) of the 1995 decision, conform to the letter of existing political agreements, but there is room to increase the level accountability. All States Parties should voluntarily provide information on their efforts to implement all articles of the Treaty as well as key political agreements from previous RevCons given the intertwined nature of the Treaty’s three pillars. Canada has already demonstrated its readiness to do so by submitting annual reports to NPT meetings that address efforts to implement all articles of the NPT, the 1995 resolution on the
Middle East, the 13 Practical Steps from 2000 and, most recently, the 2010 Action Plan. In our view, this provides the highest level of transparency and makes an essential contribution to confidence-building among States Parties. It is regrettable to note the decline in the number of reports that have been submitted in recent years, with 36 submitted in 2005 and only 24 submitted in 2010. We call upon all States Parties to help reverse this trend.

In conclusion, Canada asserts that strengthening the NPT’s review process remains an issue that merits further consultations with States Parties during the 2015 review cycle.

Thank you, Mr. Chairman.