STATEMENT

BY

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OF THE REPUBLIC OF SOUTH AFRICA TO THE IAEA
ON BEHALF OF THE NEW AGENDA COALITION

FIRST PREPARATORY COMMITTEE FOR THE
2015 REVIEW CONFERENCE
OF THE PARTIES TO THE TREATY ON THE NON-PROLIFERATION OF
NUCLEAR WEAPONS

CLUSTER I: NUCLEAR DISARMAMENT

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VIENNA

Check against delivery
Chairperson,

I have the honour of taking the floor on behalf of the seven members of the New Agenda Coalition (NAC): Brazil, Ireland, Egypt, Mexico, New Zealand, Sweden and my own country, South Africa.

During the general debate statement, the NAC already explained its raison d’être and reiterated its continued commitment towards the achievement of a world free from the threat posed by nuclear weapons. In the interest of brevity, this statement will therefore focus on the implementation of the Action Plan adopted at the 2010 Non-Proliferation Treaty (NPT) Review Conference and the NAC’s expectations for 2015 Review Cycle.

The 2010 Action Plan was an important achievement in our quest for nuclear disarmament. After ten years without any agreement, it brought us back on track. Indeed, the 2010 Review Conference was the venue where the nuclear-weapon States (NWS) reaffirmed their commitment to unequivocally accomplish the total elimination of their nuclear arsenals leading to nuclear disarmament in accordance with Article VI of the Treaty. They further recommitted themselves to accelerate progress on the steps in this regard, thereby reaffirming the decisions taken in 1995 and 2000 to advance the implementation of Article VI. Importantly, the Conference also reemphasised the commitment to apply the principles of irreversibility, verifiability and transparency in relation to nuclear disarmament measures.

The success of the 2010 Review Conference will ultimately be measured against the extent to which these solemn undertakings are implemented. The outcome of the 2010 Review Conference provided yet another opportunity to States Parties to illustrate their commitment to this instrument through concrete follow-on actions in support of achieving the objectives of the NPT. Failure to take the agreed steps will, once again, erode confidence among States Parties and undermine the credibility of the NPT process.

Chairperson,

This first PrepCom therefore gives us an opportunity to look at progress so far and reflect on the strides made. Although the strides made since the 2010 NPT Review Conference have been modest in both scope and nature, the NAC has never shied away from acknowledging progress.

We therefore welcome the entry-into-force of the New START Agreement between the Russian Federation and the United States, in accordance with Action 8 of the 13 practical steps agreed to at the 2000 Review Conference, resulting in the reduction of the overall number of operationally deployed strategic nuclear weapons. The NAC, however, remains concerned that several thousand nuclear warheads remain intact and no progress can be discerned with respect to the reduction and elimination of those nuclear weapons that are stationed outside the territories of the NWS. Similarly, we remain concerned at the continued modernisation of nuclear arsenals, together with the vast resources allocated for this purpose, which runs contrary to the NPT undertakings. The NAC reiterates that any reduction, as with all disarmament measures undertaken, must be irreversible, transparent and internationally verifiable. Linked to this is the continued role and significance of nuclear weapons in all military and security concepts, doctrines and policies. Regrettably, nuclear deterrence policies remain a defining characteristic of the military doctrines of NWS and the security alliances that they are party to.
The entry-into-force of the Comprehensive Nuclear Test-Ban Treaty (CTBT) remains an important outstanding issue where further progress is urgently required. The Treaty is a core element of the international non-proliferation and disarmament regime — raising the threshold for the acquisition of nuclear weapons, preventing a qualitative arms race and reducing the reliance on nuclear weapons in national security strategies. The entry into force of the Treaty would also strengthen confidence in the international security system through the establishment of an effective verification mechanism. In this regard, all CTBT undertakings contained in the 2010 Action Plan should be duly fulfilled. Some positive progress has been made towards the entry-into-force of the CTBT, most recently through the ratification by Indonesia — the first Annex 2 State to ratify since 2008. We further welcome the ratifications of the Central African Republic, Ghana, Guinea, Guatemala, Trinidad and Tobago and the signature of Niue.

In its statement during the General Debate, the NAC emphasised the importance of the full implementation of the 1995 Resolution on the Middle East and the actions agreed to in this regard at the 2010 NPT Review Conference. We therefore look forward to the successful convening of the Conference in 2012, as a first step towards realising the 1995 Resolution.

The NAC welcomes the recent significant efforts undertaken in the Conference on Disarmament (CD) that included the tabling of a draft programme of work, which unfortunately did not achieve consensus. The NAC is therefore disappointed that the CD has, despite intensified efforts, not been able to implement the three specific recommendations of the 2010 Action Plan on nuclear disarmament, due to the continued lack of consensus on a programme of work.

Chairperson,

Despite some modest gains, key challenges remain. Indeed, the only absolute guarantee against the use of nuclear weapons is their complete elimination and the assurance that they will never be produced again. As the NAC has always maintained, what does not exist cannot proliferate. As such, pending the elimination of nuclear weapons, it is critical that all remaining challenges be tackled head-on. These include, amongst others, the commencement of substantive work on nuclear disarmament, including the conclusion of a non-discriminatory, multilateral and effectively verifiable treaty banning the production of fissile material for nuclear weapons and other nuclear explosive devices that should fulfil both nuclear disarmament and nuclear non-proliferation objectives. They also encompass the need to give effect to the legitimate interest of the non-nuclear-weapons States (NNWS) in receiving unequivocal and legally-binding security assurances from the NWS.

Chairperson,

Each unfulfilled agreement and undertaking reached at Review Conferences diminishes the credibility of the NPT and contributes to the confidence-deficit among States Parties. As such, whilst we acknowledge what has been done and what has not, this PrepCom must also look to the future and give concrete expression to the commitments to accelerated implementation, as reflected in the conclusions and recommendations for follow-on actions in the 2010 Final Document.

In so doing, the NAC believes that the 2015 Review Cycle must, inter alia, ensure the following:
• First, the NWS must, without further delay, fulfill their obligations flowing from Article VI through concrete, systematic and progressive efforts, in accordance with the agreements reached in 1995, 2000 and 2010.

• Second, it is imperative that the follow-on measures to the New START agreement, aimed at achieving deeper reductions in nuclear arsenals, should address all deployed and non-deployed nuclear weapons, both strategic and non-strategic.

• Third, it is important that the NWS engender confidence in their commitment to implement their undertakings, including through enhanced transparency measures. They are urged to agree as soon as possible on a standard reporting format and to report regularly on progress made to implement Action 5 and indeed the other elements of the Action Plan in advance of 2014. An appropriate reporting interval would be at least on an annual basis.

• Fourth, all States Parties, particularly the NWS together with all the states of the region concerned, must report on the steps taken to implement the 1995 Middle East Resolution, through the UN Secretariat, to the President of the 2015 Review Conference, as well as to the Chairperson of the Preparatory Committee meetings to be held in advance of that Conference.

• Fifth, there is an urgent need to develop adequate and efficient nuclear disarmament verification capabilities and legally-binding verification arrangements. All NWS must initiate or accelerate the development of multilateral arrangements for placing fissile material no longer required for military purposes under the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA).

• Sixth, given the indiscriminate and disproportionate nature of nuclear weapons, all State Parties should reaffirm that their use would constitute a violation of international humanitarian law. In addition, there is a need to explore and further consider the catastrophic humanitarian consequences associated with them, including consistency with international law and particularly international humanitarian law.

• Seventh, further measures should be adopted to achieve the total elimination of all nuclear weapons and a safer world for all, consistent with the conclusions and recommendations for follow-on actions, in the Final Document of the 2010 NPT Review Conference.

• Eighth, those states that are part of military alliances, which include NWS should report, as a significant transparency and confidence-building measure, on steps taken or future steps planned to reduce and eliminate the role of nuclear weapons in collective security doctrines.

• Lastly, all State Parties to the NPT should work towards the construction of a comprehensive framework of mutually reinforcing instruments for the achievement and maintenance of a world without nuclear weapons. Such a legally-binding framework for the total elimination of all nuclear weapons must include clearly defined benchmarks and timelines, backed by a strong system of verification, in order to be efficient and credible.
Chairperson,

With these words, allow me, on behalf of the NAC, to introduce working paper NPT/CONF.2015/PC.I/WP.29 entitled “Nuclear Disarmament”, which reflects many of the elements dealt with in this statement.

In closing, Chairperson, the NAC will continue to work with all States Parties to ensure that the NWS and those states outside the NPT take the requisite steps towards the speedy, final and total elimination of their nuclear arsenals. We call upon others, including members of civil society, to join hands with us in our pursuit for a better world, free from the threat of nuclear weapons and their associated destructive consequences.

I thank you.