CZECH REPUBLIC

Statement by

Mr. Ladislav STEINHÜBEL
First Secretary of the Permanent Mission of the Czech Republic
to the UN

at

Third session of the Preparatory Committee to the NPT
Cluster I

New York, 2 May 2014

Check against delivery
Mr. Chairman,

1. At the outset, let me thank you for your excellent work done so far. The Czech Republic fully supports the statement delivered on behalf of the EU. It is my honour to draw your attention to the issues that are of particular importance to my country.

2. We support the implementation of all articles of the Non-Proliferation Treaty, including nuclear disarmament. However, we are of the view that the longstanding objective of the complete elimination of nuclear weapons may be achieved only under certain conditions. The effective functioning of the non-proliferation regime on a global scale coupled with a powerful verification regime that could provide assurances of irreversibility of nuclear disarmament are indispensable for a world without nuclear weapons. Therefore, we stress the need to faithfully implement all steps agreed in the 2010 Action Plan. Promoting the concept of “building blocks” could lead us to the global Zero as it was proposed by President Obama in Prague in 2009.

3. The 2010 NPT Review Conference again confirmed that nothing in the Treaty should be interpreted as affecting the inalienable right of all parties to the Treaty to develop research, production and use of nuclear energy for peaceful purposes without discrimination. This right, however, goes hand in hand with responsible behaviour of States Parties in terms of abiding by their non-proliferation obligations, recognised international standards and safeguards agreements.

4. The final document of the 2010 NPT Review Conference articulated that the Conference expressed its deep concern at the catastrophic humanitarian consequences of any use of nuclear weapons and reaffirmed the need for all States at all times to comply with applicable international law, including international humanitarian law. The devastating immediate and long-term humanitarian impacts of a nuclear weapon detonation are of a clear concern and that is why we reiterate our unwavering commitment to achieving and maintaining the goal of a world free of nuclear weapons.

5. It is important that on the way of achieving the final goal of a world free of nuclear weapons the humanitarian dimension has been recognised as set out in the Action Plan. It is also important that all nuclear-weapon states have committed to fully respect their existing commitments with regard to security assurances. In order to maintain and strengthen the NPT regime, a mutual confidence between nuclear-weapon states and non-nuclear-weapon states is essential.

6. The Czech Republic, being the first European country to ratify the Comprehensive Nuclear- Test -Ban Treaty (CTBT), would like to reaffirm its support to the process leading to the entry into force of the CTBT, which will significantly strengthen the international security architecture based on the NPT. We fully support the efforts of the Provisional Technical Secretariat (PTS) to further develop the CTBT verification regime as a strong non-proliferation and confidence building instrument.

7. This session of the Preparatory Committee is a suitable occasion to call upon those States that have not yet signed or ratified the CTBT to do so without delay, in particular the eight remaining States listed in Annex 2 to the CTBT whose ratification is necessary for its entry
into force. Pending the entry into force of the CTBT, we welcome the moratoria on nuclear tests, declared also by several States that have not yet ratified the Treaty. Such voluntary moratoria can however never substitute the legal ban constituted by the CTBT, as they can be unilaterally revoked at any time.

8. Like the vast majority of UN Member States, we also attach priority to the commencement and early conclusion of negotiations in the Conference on Disarmament on a legally-binding treaty banning the production of fissile material for nuclear weapons or other nuclear explosive devices. We consequently support the establishment of a relevant Group of Governmental Experts with a simple mandate allowing for discussions on a non-discriminatory, multilateral and internationally verifiable treaty and making recommendations on possible aspects that could contribute to future negotiations of the treaty. A representative of the Czech Republic actively participates in the work of this expert group. Any positive steps this group could achieve towards the ban on the production of fissile materials would carry a good message to the forthcoming 2015 NPT Review Conference.

9. We understand that launching such negotiations is not feasible without consensus on adopting a Programme of Work of the CD. In this connection we would like to express our view that this Programme must also include an item on CD membership enlargement. The Czech Republic as the current chair of the Informal Group of Observer States to the Conference on Disarmament believes that the enlargement is not only essential to the CD but also to the international community as a whole. This step could help the CD to regain its credibility and dispel any doubts to the relevance of the CD.

10. It is our strong belief that the implementation of the goals of the NPT need broad public support and that is why promotion of education on disarmament and non-proliferation should be always among our priorities. For this reason we cosponsored the Joint Statement on Disarmament and Non-Proliferation Education initiated by Japan.

Thank you for your attention.

(Check against delivery)