SOUTH AFRICA’S STATEMENT ON THE DRAFT CHAIR’S SUMMARY AT THE NPT FIRST PREPCOM, FRIDAY, 12 MAY 2017:

Thank you Mr Chairperson,

At the outset, let me join others in expressing my delegation’s appreciation to you for steering this session of the PrepCom to its conclusion.

South Africa associates itself with the statement delivered on behalf of the New Agenda Coalition.

While my delegation notes the balanced reflection of views expressed by various delegations on this draft Chair’s Factual Summary, we wish to highlight the following concerns.

Chairperson,

This First NPT PrepCom follows after the disappointment of the 2015 RevCon and provided State Parties the opportunity to engage extensively on the state of the NPT and progress on the implementation of its three pillars since 2015. In this regard, it was a matter of concern to peruse the draft summary and only almost halfway through find one paragraph referring to the UN process to negotiate a legally-binding instrument to prohibit nuclear weapons, leading towards their total elimination. In South Africa’s view, expressed directly in our statements and in statements of more than 20 State Parties, this UN process significantly contributes to the implementation of Article VI and
implementation of the nuclear disarmament pillar and which is probably the most prominent process on the implementation of the NPT taking place since the 2015 RevCon. Given the consideration given to this process by a large number of States and its contribution to the NPT, South Africa anticipated that this process would be reflected earlier in the Chairs summary.

In addition the draft summary only makes a reference to the Prohibition Treaty as an effort to support and strengthen the Treaty, while delegations expressed a number opportunities and benefits associated with this instrument such as filling the legal gap and strengthening the international norm amongst others. It was in this regard that South Africa, together with a number of State Parties, called on the Nuclear Weapon States and all other States to participate in the negotiations. Unfortunately this unanimous call was not captured in the draft Chair’s Summary.

Likewise, the humanitarian consequences of the use of nuclear weapons was raised by South Africa together with a number of other State Parties. In this regard, South Africa is of the view that the humanitarian consequences aspect has not been comprehensively reflected given the amount of interventions made by State Parties and its importance to nuclear disarmament and non-proliferation.

Chairperson,

On the issue of nuclear security, South Africa would like to reiterate that nuclear security must be located in the broader framework of nuclear
disarmament, nuclear non-proliferation and the peaceful uses of nuclear energy. We regret that this balance was not maintained in the Chair’s summary and wish to highlight that effort to strengthen nuclear security must not hamper international cooperation in the field of peaceful nuclear activities – a position shared by all NAM States Parties.

With reference to paragraph 5, we take note of the fact that South Sudan has not yet acceded to the NPT. However, it is our view that the circumstances impeding South Sudan from acceding to the NPT are very different from those of India, Israel and Pakistan who are referenced in the same paragraph. While South Africa fully supports the universalisation of the NPT, we believe that a paragraph directly calling on India, Israel and Pakistan to join the NPT as non-nuclear weapon states, given their respective positions on the Treaty, reflects the shared view of State Parties as expressed in this PrepCom. The accession to the Treaty of South Sudan should be generally reflected separately to the issue of the above States.

Chairperson,

My delegation reiterates its commitment to the NPT as the cornerstone of the nuclear non-proliferation and disarmament and stands ready to work with other State Parties to make the 2020 NPT review cycle a success.

I thank you Chairperson