First Preparatory Committee for the 2020 Review Conference of the Parties to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT)

Vienna, 2 May 2017

Mr. Chairman,

At the outset, allow me to congratulate you on assuming the chairmanship of the first Preparatory Committee for the 2020 NPT Review Conference and assure you of our firm support towards your efforts to achieve a successful, comprehensive and balanced outcome of the meeting.

Aligning ourselves fully with the statement of the European Union, we would like to highlight some specific issues of particular importance to Estonia.

Mr. Chairman,

For Estonia, the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT) is indeed the cornerstone of global efforts to pursue nuclear disarmament, non-proliferation and peaceful uses of nuclear energy. We are approaching the 50th anniversary of this unique multilateral instrument, witnessing its vitally important role in keeping our world safer and paving the way towards creating conditions for a world free of nuclear weapons, where the security interests of all countries are addressed.

We reaffirm our full support towards all three pillars of the Treaty and to the implementation of all commitments assumed under it. Estonia is committed to making efforts in order to advance a tangible progress under the 2010 Action Plan in accordance with the progressive step by step approach. We see the relevance of this approach in advancing our shared goals. In this regard, we refer to the working paper submitted by 25 states with suggestions for the 2017 Preparatory Committee from the perspectives of the progressive approach.
We acknowledge the progress towards a Fissile Material Cut-off Treaty (FMCT) and nuclear verification. Last year, the vast majority of UN states supported two important UNGA resolutions - on Nuclear Disarmament Verification and on the FMCT. We welcome the establishment of the High Level FMCT Expert Preparatory Group, whose mandate is to make recommendations on substantial elements for a future Treaty, without prejudice to national positions in future negotiations. We also welcome the establishment of the Group of Governmental Experts to consider the role of verification in advancing nuclear disarmament. We are confident, that the only way to achieve complete elimination of nuclear weapons is through an effective, verifiable and irreversible nuclear disarmament.

The Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty (CTBT) is of crucial importance to nuclear disarmament and non-proliferation, and we acknowledge the progress made in strengthening the verification regime. We encourage the remaining countries to seek early ratification of the CTBT and consider its universalization and entry into force to be a top priority. We urge the States, particularly those whose adherence is required for the CTBT to enter into force, to sign and ratify the Treaty without further delay.

The provocative actions of the DPRK show the urgent need to further strengthen the NPT and for the CTBT to enter into force as soon as possible. Estonia condemns, in the strongest terms, the nuclear tests and ballistic missile launches carried out by the DPRK, in violation and flagrant disregard of multiple UN Security Council Resolutions. We demand that DPRK returns to compliance without delay and abandons its nuclear and ballistic missile programmes in a complete, verifiable and irreversible manner.

As the only multilateral transparency and confidence-building instrument against ballistic missile proliferation, we continue to support the universality and implementation of the Hague Code of Conduct (HCoC).

We would like to underline the importance of the work of international export control regimes and encourage all states to make use of multilaterally agreed guidelines and principles in developing their own national export controls. We also strongly speak for the membership of all EU Member States in the MTCR. This measure will help advancing the goals of non-proliferation.
The Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action (JCPOA) between the E3/EU+3 and Iran demonstrates that it is possible to find peaceful and diplomatic solutions even to the most pressing proliferation challenges. This is a multilateral, successful endeavour, concluded in full conformity with the principles of the NPT. My country remains committed to supporting the JCPOA and its full implementation, as verified by the IAEA.

Mr. Chairman,

Estonia values the role of the IAEA’s system of safeguards in strengthening the nuclear non-proliferation regime and believes that it serves the interest of the development of nuclear applications for peaceful purposes. Nuclear technology has an essential role in contributing to the socio-economic development, science, innovation and technology all around the world.

In order to ensure the safe use of nuclear energy, it is important for all NPT States Parties to follow the highest safety and security standards. All decisions regarding peaceful uses of nuclear energy should be made in a transparent manner to promote confidence and cooperation between countries.

The entry into force of the Amendment to the Convention on the Physical Protection of Nuclear Material was an important step towards improving nuclear security globally. Estonia looks forward to the adoption of the Code of Conduct as well as its supplementary guidance to enhance safety and security of radioactive sources. We are a committed donor to the IAEA Nuclear Security Fund.

Mr. Chairman,

We believe that the outcome document of the 2017 Preparatory Committee should reflect practical progress on many items of the 2010 NPT Action Plan, including on developing nuclear disarmament verification capabilities, increasing transparency measures, negotiating the FMCT and achieving the early entry into force of the CTBT. Focusing on common goals and engaging constructively in advancing realistic and achievable objectives, will help to strengthen the NPT and move towards our shared goal of a world without nuclear weapons.