Statement by
H.E. Mr. Andrej Benedejčič
Permanent Representative of Slovenia to the International Organizations in Vienna
and Head of Delegation
at the First Session of the Preparatory Committee for the 2020 Review Conference of the Parties to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons
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Mr. Chairperson, Excellencies, Ladies and Gentlemen,

Let me start by congratulating Ambassador Van der Kwast for assuming the role of the Chairperson of the first Preparatory Committee meeting of the 2020 NPT Review Conference and wish him all success in his endeavors.

As member of the European Union, Slovenia supports the statement delivered earlier by Ambassador Jacek Bylica, the EEAS Principal Adviser and Special Envoy for Non-proliferation and Disarmament. In addition, I would like to make several remarks in my national capacity.

Mr. Chairperson,

Slovenia is a strong supporter of non-proliferation and disarmament of nuclear weapons. We are committed to treaty-based nuclear disarmament and arms control and advocate universal adherence to and full implementation of all non-proliferation and disarmament treaties and conventions.

We are of firm belief that we have to achieve our common goal of the world free of nuclear weapons progressively through the full implementation of the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT). For Slovenia the NPT remains the cornerstone of
disarmament, non-proliferation and development of nuclear energy applications for peaceful purposes.

In 2010 NPT Review Conference we have agreed on the step-by-step Action plan with practical measures also in the area of disarmament to which we are all committed.

Slovenia has supported resolutions and activities focused on delivering concrete, tangible results that are related to progressive disarmament. These include nuclear test ban (CTBT), transparency in the area of ballistic missiles (HCoC), nuclear disarmament verification, banning the production of fissile material for nuclear weapons (FMCT), decreasing the operational readiness of nuclear weapons, as well as establishing and maintaining nuclear weapons free zones (NWFZ).

We believe that significant progress has been made in all these areas and we encourage all nuclear weapon states to participate in these initiatives. In our view, effective, verifiable and irreversible nuclear disarmament requires not only appropriate technical and security conditions, but also an active engagement of states that possess nuclear weapons. This is also why we think that immediate negotiations for a legally binding instrument to prohibit nuclear weapons will not contribute to achieving this noble goal, to which my country is fully committed.

Mr. Chairperson,

As one of only thirty states with an operating nuclear power reactor, Slovenia attaches great importance to the work of the IAEA. This is clearly demonstrated through our current membership in its Board of Governors, already third such engagement since becoming an IAEA member 25 years ago. We therefore welcome the significant contribution of the Agency to the implementation of NPT.

We also commend the role of the IAEA in ensuring Iran's on-going implementation of its commitments under the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action. This is essential to ensure international confidence in the exclusively peaceful nature of the Iranian nuclear programme.

We believe that we should continue with our efforts to engage the DPRK. Its constructive dialogue with the international community is essential for achieving complete and verifiable denuclearization of the Korean Peninsula. We strongly condemn DPRK's illegal nuclear tests and
ballistic missile launches. It should refrain from them and immediately comply with its international obligations. Syria should also resolve all the outstanding issues and adhere to the Additional Protocol. Together with the Comprehensive Safeguards Agreement it constitutes an effective verification standard.

Mr. Chairperson,

Slovenia is concerned with the risk of non-state actors acquiring WMDs. We have been therefore supporting UNSC resolution 1540 and the work of the 1540 Committee to strengthen global capacity to prevent, detect, and respond to the use of WMD for terrorist purposes.

We understand that nuclear security remains the responsibility of states. We thus strongly support international cooperation in this area to effectually cope with serious challenges both on the global and national levels. In this context we have recently joined the Nuclear Security Contact Group, which aims to facilitate cooperation and strengthen activities on nuclear security. As a country whose experts were deeply engaged in the process of preparation of the Amendment to the Convention on the Physical Protection of Nuclear Material (a-CPPNM), we warmly welcome its recent entry into force, and underline the importance of its universalization and full implementation.

Mr. Chairperson,

In the IAEA Board of Governors we follow closely our priority areas which are nuclear energy, nuclear safety and technical assistance.

Slovenia supports the Agency in its discharge of statutory obligations of offering technical assistance in its area of work, regardless the big differences in the needs of Member states. Slovenia is always open to share its experience with others and is interested in improving its own capabilities. This kind of capacity building is vital for any country dealing with nuclear technology. We welcome and support the Agency’s contribution to the implementation of Sustainable Development Goals.

Mr. Chairperson,

In conclusion, Slovenia will continue to contribute to the implementation of the NPT and its measures and Action plan in the best possible way. In this context, and also because of our more active role within the IAEA, this year’s Bled Strategic Forum, an annual international gathering in
Slovenia, will also feature a panel on Global Nuclear Governance. [I would like to thank Director General Amano and Executive Secretary Dr. Zerbo for confirming their participation at the event.] We are looking forward to a very productive and interesting discussion.

Mr. Chairperson,

We will contribute to *constructive discussions* in the next days that will hopefully lead us to a successful 2020 NPT Rev Con.

Thank you.