7th Review Conference
of the Parties to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons
Statement of Ambassador Volker Heinsberg
at Main Committee I

Check against delivery!
Mr President,

First of all accept my warm congratulations on your election as President of this Committee. I wish you every success for your important task.

Mr President,

As set clearly out by Foreign Minister Fischer in his speech on 2 May 2005 our efforts at this conference must be directed equally towards the two central aims of this Treaty: “ensure that states abide by their non-proliferation commitments, at the same time, we must bring new momentum to nuclear disarmament.” This committee is devoted to discuss recommendations and decisions to be agreed by the Conference with regard to nuclear disarmament. Germany fully endorses the Statement made on behalf of the European Union in this regard and would also like to recall its contributions already made during the Review process for this Conference.

Minister Fischer underlined explicitly in his speech of 2 May that the aim of German policy remains a world that is free of the threat of nuclear weapons. There is a general agreement on the final goal of the process of nuclear disarmament, i.e. the total elimination of nuclear weapons. This goal was made explicit in the “Principles and objectives for Nuclear Non-Proliferation and Disarmament” adopted by the 1995 NPT-Review and Extension Conference and in the Final Document of the 2000 NPT Review Conference, in which the nuclear weapon states subsequently declared their “unequivocal undertaking to accomplish the total elimination of their nuclear arsenals” as part of the 13 practical steps to implement Art.VI of the NPT.

These decisions did not occur in a vacuum. It is the end of the Cold war, the end of the East-West confrontation, which has brought with it these new opportunities for practical and concrete measures in the field of nuclear disarmament reflected in the commitments of those documents.
Today the situation with regard to these new opportunities has not changed. Since 1995 we have indeed faced several serious challenges to the Treaty with regard to compliance with the non-proliferation provisions of the Treaty. The Conference will have to address them carefully with the objective to further strengthen the regime in this regard. However, the situation as far as the new opportunity for nuclear disarmament has not changed since 1995. We have to continue to make full use of it.

Firstly, with the final objective and the practical steps to achieve this final objective already agreed, the Conference should strongly reaffirm its commitment to implement the decisions taken at the 1995 Extension and Review Conference and the agreements reflected in the Final Document of the 2000 Review Conference with regard to nuclear disarmament. Thus the 13 Practical Steps of the 2000 Final Document have to remain the benchmark for further progress in the field of Nuclear disarmament.

Secondly, the Conference should acknowledge that the complete elimination of nuclear weapons cannot be achieved in one leap and should endorse the concept of a step-by-step approach as already enshrined in the 13 Practical steps of the 2000 Final document. We need a common agreement of the concept of an incremental approach, which — gradually and inexorably — leads to the achievement of the goal of total elimination of Nuclear weapons.

Thirdly, the Conference should, while recognizing the achievements and the progress already made with regard to nuclear disarmament since the end of the cold war, underscore the necessity to install a new momentum to proceed on this precharted course in the direction of the complete elimination of nuclear weapons. To do so, the decisive challenges, which still lie ahead of us, most of them already clearly set out in 2000, have to be addressed, words be followed by deeds.

Mr President,

On the list of decisions to be taken and the measures to be implemented as next steps on our course to the total elimination of Nuclear weapons the restart of the stalled
process at the Geneva Conference on Disarmament is one of the most important steps. The Conference on Disarmament, being the unique permanent multilateral body for disarmament negotiations, has to be brought rapidly back to work. Unblocking the Conference on Disarmament would be a visible sign of the willingness to decisively continue global nuclear disarmament efforts. Otherwise the seriousness of any decisions in the field of nuclear disarmament this conference might take, would be put immediately into question.

The early entry into force of the Comprehensive Test Ban Treaty remains an issue that we are particularly committed to. We call on all States which have not yet done so, especially those whose ratification is necessary for the entry into force of the CTBT, to sign and ratify the Treaty without delay.

Until this happens, we expect that the nuclear-weapon states will maintain their moratoria on nuclear testing, respectively China to join this moratorium rapidly. Thus, even without a CTBT already in force, there should be no doubts, that nuclear weapons testing belongs to the past.

The next important component in order to accomplish the total elimination of Nuclear Arsenals is the rapid start of negotiations of a Fissile Material Cut-off Treaty without preconditions. Germany has been supportive from the beginning for the objective of a non-discriminatory, universally applicable and verifiable FMCT.

The further reduction of sub-strategic nuclear weapons - with the ultimate goal of their complete elimination - has to be further pursued. Also with regard to sub-strategic nuclear weapons a step-by-step approach has to be followed. The complete implementation of the respective unilateral commitments that were made by the United States and Russia in 1991 and 1992 being a first step in this regard, to be followed by agreed transparency measures that would account for these weapons, leading up to the formalization and verification of the unilateral commitments.
There are other issues, like legally binding negative security assurances by the Nuclear weapons states, continued efforts for universal adherence to the Treaty which could contribute to the necessary new momentum for nuclear disarmament.

It is irrelevant to discuss when we will be able to attain a nuclear weapon-free world. We must instead devote all our efforts to continued and steady progress in this direction and there should be no room for doubts that we are moving irreversibly forward.