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STATEMENT BY
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MAIN COMMITTEE III

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CHECK AGAINST DELIVERY
Mr. Chairman.

Just over a year ago in Prague, President Barack Obama stated, “we must harness the power of nuclear energy on behalf of our efforts to combat climate change, and to advance peace and opportunity for all people.”

As these words attest, we all have much to gain from the peaceful uses of nuclear energy.

President Obama also recalled the links among the Non-Proliferation Treaty’s three pillars when he stated “we should build a new framework for civil nuclear cooperation so that countries can access peaceful power without increasing the risks of proliferation. That must be the right of every nation that renounces nuclear weapons, especially developing countries embarking on peaceful programs.”

For 40 years, the NPT has enshrined our mutual commitments to nonproliferation, disarmament, and the peaceful uses of nuclear energy. In this Review Conference, Main Committee III gives us the opportunity to take a close look at the peaceful uses of nuclear energy and how the NPT has fostered them.

Importantly, Article IV of the Treaty attests to the right of States Party to employ the atom for peaceful uses, which can include basic research, medical advances, agricultural gains, industrial innovation, and the production of heat, fresh water, and electricity.

Equally importantly, Article IV underscores the nonproliferation responsibilities that accompany the right to peaceful uses of nuclear energy. The reasons for this are clear. Without the nonproliferation provisions contained in Articles I and II, Parties could not have confidence that nuclear cooperation would serve only peaceful uses. Without the safeguards provisions of Article III, Parties could not ensure that peaceful cooperation is not diverted for the development of nuclear explosive devices. The fullest possible access to peaceful uses depends on a strong nonproliferation and verification regime.

It is an unfortunate matter of fact that ostensibly peaceful nuclear programs can be diverted for military ends. Plainly put, uranium enrichment and spent fuel reprocessing technologies can be used to produce fuel for nuclear reactors as well as to create material directly usable in nuclear weapons. For this reason, the IAEA Board of Governors agreed in 1979 to categorize these particular applications as “sensitive technological areas.”
Fortunately, it is abundantly possible for states to enjoy the benefits of civil nuclear power without investing in costly and complex fuel-cycle technologies. The large majority of countries operating nuclear power plants today have chosen to obtain their fuel from the international market. For those seeking greater security of supply, the United States is working with many others to develop mechanisms—such as international nuclear fuel banks—to enhance the assurance of fuel supply.

To maintain the balance among the Treaty's pillars, any steps we take to address potential proliferation risks must not contradict our collective efforts to facilitate access to peaceful uses, and vice-versa. President Obama emphasized this point at Prague when stating that “[n]o approach will succeed if it is based on the denial of rights to nations that play by the rules.”

Mr. Chairman,

The United States was the pioneer of civil nuclear cooperation. Speaking at the United Nations on December 8, 1953, President Eisenhower called for a mobilization of experts “to apply atomic energy to the needs of agriculture, medicine, and other peaceful activities.” “A special purpose,” he noted, “would be to provide abundant electrical energy in the power-starved areas of the world.”

In the years following this landmark “Atoms for Peace” speech, the United States laid the foundation for its own program of civil nuclear cooperation. By 1960, we had concluded 44 nuclear cooperation agreements. Over the ensuing decades, the United States worked with partners in all regions of the world on many peaceful nuclear applications of direct importance to their social and economic development.

Today, the United States is the single largest contributor to IAEA programs in nuclear applications for health, agriculture, and water management. We provide over 25 percent of all contributions to both the regular budget and the Technical Cooperation Fund. To the latter, we contributed nearly $200 million over the past decade. These contributions have enabled more than 100 developing and emerging countries to develop and advance the peaceful uses of nuclear energy.

We view this support for peaceful use activities as being an integral component of our NPT responsibilities; strengthening this support must be part of a balanced approach to strengthening the Treaty. For this reason, Secretary Clinton announced last Monday President Obama’s initiative to significantly increase our
contribution towards IAEA activities in this area. Over the next five years, the United States will contribute $50 million dollars to IAEA activities related to cancer therapy and human health, the development of nuclear power infrastructure, food security and nutrition, and water resource management. We encourage our international partners to join us in this effort to significantly expand access to these peaceful applications of nuclear energy.

Mr. Chairman,

Since the last Review Conference five years ago, interest in peaceful nuclear power has expanded greatly. This has in turn sparked an expansion of civil nuclear cooperation in this important area. As a result, the benefits of Article IV are being exercised to a degree not seen in decades.

In May 2005, the IAEA was projecting an increase in nuclear power capacity by 2030 of just over 60 percent. Today, this has been increased to a projected growth of nearly 120 percent – a difference of 215 gigawatts-electric, or roughly 200 new nuclear power plants, worldwide by 2030. Moreover, interest in civil nuclear power has reached new parts of the globe, thus offering the potential for even more NPT Parties to enjoy the benefits encompassed by Article IV.

Civil nuclear power is a serious undertaking requiring a significant infrastructure. This includes nuclear-specific laws, regulations, and human resources. It involves the ability to license, construct, operate, and inspect power plants and to handle waste and other radioactive materials. The safe and secure development of nuclear power cannot proceed if any of these components is lacking.

At last count, more than 65 countries had expressed interest in new nuclear power programs to the IAEA. The Agency has responded with a significant undertaking – based on clear milestones – to provide guidance along this path. The United States has been a major supporter of this effort.

In addition, many states are turning to bilateral cooperation with countries with more experience. The United States and others have expanded bilateral infrastructure development programs accordingly. Through information sharing on proven best practices, many emerging nuclear energy states are benefitting from important lessons learned by their partners.
Indeed, there is so much recent activity in infrastructure development that the IAEA has convened several meetings to better coordinate and harmonize bilateral and multilateral cooperation.

The United States is working bilaterally with countries interested in nuclear power to develop the robust infrastructures necessary for its safe, secure, and safeguarded deployment. The U.S. Department of Energy, its National Nuclear Security Administration, and the Nuclear Regulatory Commission have established technical cooperation arrangements with over 40 countries, encompassing every region of the world. Through these avenues of cooperation, U.S. experts are working closely with their counterparts from NPT Parties embarking on peaceful nuclear power.

A half century ago, the United States took the first steps to unlock access to the peaceful uses of nuclear energy. We have striven ever since to expand the benefits derived from these applications. But more can be done, and we are working every day to improve and enhance our cooperation programs.

In conclusion, Mr. Chairman,

The United States is committed to strengthening all three pillars of the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty. Nonproliferation, disarmament, and peaceful uses are inherently linked and tightly interwoven. As stewards of the Treaty, we must all ensure that support of one pillar does not undermine any other.

Fortunately, as President Obama observed in Prague, “the basic bargain is sound,” and the Treaty rests firmly on its three pillars. That does not mean, however, that we should refrain from efforts to strengthen this foundation. The United States is therefore committed to addressing proliferation risks so that no NPT Party will be hindered in its pursuit of peaceful uses.

More than five decades have passed since the United States launched its first outreach under “Atoms for Peace,” but our commitment to civil nuclear cooperation remains as strong as ever. Through the sharing of experience, lessons learned, and best practices, the United States is helping NPT Parties build the capacity they need to pursue nuclear energy for peaceful purposes and to develop the highest standards of safety, security, and nonproliferation.