STATEMENT BY AMBASSADOR CLAUDE HELLER,
PERMANENT REPRESENTATIVE OF MEXICO TO THE UNITED
NATIONS, AT THE 2010 REVIEW CONFERENCE OF THE PARTIES TO
THE TREATY ON THE NON-PROLIFERATION OF NUCLEAR
WEAPONS

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(CHECK AGAINST DELIVERY)
UNOFFICIAL TRANSLATION
Mr. President,

The use of nuclear weapons is contrary to all principles of International Humanitarian Law and, as it has been stated in several resolutions of the General Assembly, it would violate the Charter of the United Nations and would constitute a crime against humanity. The possession of nuclear weapons is a threat to international peace and security. It is paradoxical that in a post-Cold War world, the maintenance of peace and security continues to rely on the existence of weapons which, by themselves, threaten humanity.

Mexico has never sought to acquire this type of weapons. We have complied with our obligations derived from the Non-Proliferation Treaty (NPT) and since 1973 we have implemented, fully and transparently, the Safeguards Agreement with the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA). Likewise, Mexico has signed the Additional Protocol to the Safeguards Agreement, which I am pleased to announce has been submitted to the Mexican Senate for its prompt ratification. In addition, being one of the countries listed in Annex II of the Comprehensive-Test-Ban Treaty, Mexico has complied with its task of ratifying this instrument, and promoted the Tlatelolco Treaty which established the first nuclear weapons free zone in a densely populated area.

All this entitles Mexico with the moral authority to demand other States to also fully comply with their obligations derived from the Treaty, including Article VI.

40 years after the entry into force of the NPT, there are still more than 23 thousand nuclear warheads in the world, hundreds of which could be launched in less than four minutes. In other words, there are nuclear weapons that could be activated in less time than it takes for me to read this statement, causing an unthinkable amount of destruction. Faced with this reality, the fulfillment of the obligation imposed by the Treaty in 1970, namely, to conduct negotiations “at an early date” on the effective measures needed for nuclear disarmament, is very questionable. The indefinite extension of the Treaty in 1995 does not entail our acceptance of the indefinite possession of nuclear weapons by the five States identified by the NPT as Nuclear Weapon States (NWS).

However, it is important to acknowledge that this Conference occurs in the context of a new international climate derived from the further political will of some NWS to advance towards disarmament. The speech by the President of the United States in Prague, as well as the Security Council Summit on disarmament and non-proliferation held last year, and the Nuclear Security Summit held recently in Washington, are evidence of this context.

We also recognize the progress achieved in the area of transparency, as well as the recent signature between the Russian Federation and the United States of a strategic arms reductions treaty. We call upon the prompt ratification of this agreement, and on further negotiations with the aim of going beyond reducing the alert level of these weapons to their irreversible, transparent and verifiable destruction, including tactical weapons.

This new climate offers a window of opportunity to encourage bilateral and multilateral negotiations for disarmament, non-proliferation and the peaceful uses of nuclear energy. This Conference is framed within this dynamic and should produce positive results. In addition, we must not forget that, in times of a profound world economic crisis and of great challenges to the international community such as climate change, the enormous
expenditure related to nuclear weapons is detrimental to the economic and social development of the peoples.

NWS have the great responsibility of breaking the perverse equation of possessing nuclear weapons as a guarantee of defense against the use of such weapons, calling for a profound revision of military doctrines in order for them to adapt to the new circumstances. Nuclear weapons can indeed have dissuasive effects, but at the same time they create a false assumption that individual and collective security depends precisely on the possibility of obtaining them.

As long as nuclear weapons have a relevant role in military and strategic doctrines, and there is no clear commitment to their destruction, there will always be incentives for other States to acquire them for the same purpose. The existence of nuclear weapons creates the need to possess them.

We cannot ignore the challenges that the NPT faces. India and Pakistan have declared themselves nuclear powers outside the Treaty, while it is presumable that Israel has developed nuclear military capacity. On the other hand, the Democratic People’s Republic of Korea announced its withdrawal from the NPT and carried out two nuclear tests, which Mexico strongly condemned. We cannot accept that a larger number of States acquire nuclear capacity with military ends; that in itself is the objective of the Treaty. We cannot allow for the NPT to continue eroding.

Mexico, being one of the main drafters of the Treaty of Tlatelolco, supports the creation of nuclear weapon free zones as an effective means towards disarmament. We congratulate the recent entry into force of the Treaty of Central Asia, as well as the Treaty of Pefindaba, with which we are now more than 110 States that have signed or ratified treaties establishing NWFZ. We are sure that the outcome document adopted during the II Conference of NWFZ and Mongolia is an excellent contribution for the works of this Conference.

Nevertheless, we are well aware that the creation of NWFZ is only possible if the regional problems that cause tension and conflicts are addressed and resolved. In the Middle East, the establishment of such a Zone would only be viable as part of a global political arrangement, comprising the various issues that put at risk the stability of the region, and that represent a threat to peace and international security. Nonetheless, Mexico decidedly supports the establishment of said zone and encourages all Parties involved to commence its negotiation.

In the case of Iran, its nuclear policy cannot be understood in abstraction of its foreign policy, in which its pronouncements have raised legitimate doubts and concerns over intentions that would be incompatible with the UN Charter and International Law.

For these reasons, Iran must, with the outmost transparency, comply with the IAEA decisions, responding to all requests of information concerning its nuclear program, and with Security Council resolutions, renouncing explicitly and verifiably to the possession of nuclear weapons. Without a doubt, this will contribute to foster dialogue and cooperation as a means to solve controversies in the region.
We again call upon Israel, as well as on India and Pakistan, to adhere to the NPT.

The achievement of the universalization of the Treaty is a responsibility of all States Parties. The commitment with this objective must be congruent with our actions. We cannot call, on the one hand, for the universalization of the NPT and, on the other, conclude agreements with States outside the Treaty contrary to the commitments previously acquired in the context of Review Conferences, encouraging the former to stay outside the regime.

Likewise, we support the recent initiative of five European States, members of the North Atlantic Treaty Organization, of requesting the withdrawal of the nuclear weapons deployed in the territory of European allies, as a measure in accordance with the obligations contained in articles I and II of the NPT, related to the transfer and receipt of nuclear weapons to States that do not possess them.

Among the many challenges that derive from the peaceful use of nuclear energy is ensuring that nuclear materials are not deviated to military ends or that they fall in the hands of non-State actors, while we strengthen the IAEA safeguards. An additional challenge is to avoid that the security agenda reduces available resources to be used for technical cooperation.

Mexico supports the establishment of a multilateral mechanism of nuclear fuel that guarantees supply for all States. This mechanism must have the involvement of the IAEA, and must in no fashion represent a limitation to the inalienable right of States to use nuclear energy for peaceful purposes.

In addition to the recommendations contained in the document submitted by the New Agenda which intend to advance in the application of the 13 practical steps agreed upon in 2000, and considering the opportunity offered with this Review Conference, Mexico expects that as a result of this conference we agree on:

- A commitment by NWS that have not already done so, to publicly declare the number of nuclear warheads in their arsenals, as well as their levels of alert. Mexico supports the establishment of an accounting system within the UN that includes nuclear arsenals, delivery systems, fissile materials, and expenditures in nuclear arsenals.
- The commitment by NWS that have not already done so, to state in an unequivocal manner that they will not be the first to strike with nuclear weapons.
- The commitment to negotiate a legally binding instrument on negative security assurances, pending the total elimination of nuclear weapons.
- The reaffirmation of the unequivocal commitment by the NWS to achieve the destruction of their nuclear arsenals and to negotiate a convention that prohibits these weapons with a timeframe that provides certainty to the international community.

Finally, the Mexican delegation wishes to underscore the importance of the participation of civil society in the promotion of the NPT. The activism of NGOs represents an added value that we must make use of, as they are an important ally to States in the promotion of education for disarmament and the risks that nuclear weapons represent. We echo the
motto of the 62nd Annual DPI/NGO Conference that took place in Mexico last year: "Disarm Now!"

As we very well know, the international community is closely following this Review Conference, hoping that it achieves concrete and substantive results on the three pillars of the Treaty. Member States must show political will to face the challenges before us.

Nuclear weapons go beyond any notion of legality and legitimacy simply because the destruction they cause is massive and beyond repair.

Peace constructed or maintained through threats, is inevitably a fragile, temporary and fictitious peace. A world that can self-destroy itself hundreds of times will never be safer than one in which no weapons of extermination exist.