Statement by

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At the

2015 Review Conference of the Parties to
the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons

Main Committee II

New York, 6 May 2015
Mr. Chairman,

Let me congratulate you on your election as Chairman of Main Committee II and assure you of Ireland’s full support.

Ireland aligns itself with the statements made to this Committee by the EU and the Vienna Group of Ten.

Ireland welcomes the renewed and increased focus in recent years on the devastating humanitarian consequences of a nuclear weapons detonation. The increased awareness among States Parties will, we are fully confident, bolster the global norm against the proliferation of these weapons of mass destruction. Ireland is absolutely committed to furthering the non-proliferation objectives of the Treaty, both on its own undoubted and vital merits but also as a contributor to the goal of disarmament. Considerable work has been done on the non-proliferation of nuclear weapons but it is a task that requires constant effort and constant vigilance.

The non-proliferation goal of the NPT can only be achieved ultimately by the universalisation of the Treaty. Ireland calls on all states that have not yet done so to join the Treaty as Non-Nuclear Weapons States and, pending their accession, to adhere to its terms and pledge commitments to non-proliferation and disarmament. Ireland would also remind all existing States Parties that it is a collective obligation and responsibility on us all to promote universal adherence to the NPT.

IRAN

We welcome the recent agreement reached between the E3/EU +3 and the Islamic Republic of Iran on the key parameters of a Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action and we fully support the ongoing diplomatic efforts of the parties to bring the work to a successful conclusion by 30 June. The outline agreement will allow Iran to continue to develop its civil nuclear power programme, while providing reassurance to its neighbours and others that there will be no military nuclear programme. The agreement will provide for removal in due course of the sanctions that have been placed on Iran in relation to this dispute, as well as the continued monitoring of the Iranian programme by the appropriate international agency, the IAEA.
At the 2010 Review Conference, great efforts were made by States Parties to advance work on the establishment of a Weapons of Mass Destruction Free Zone in the Middle East. Ireland deeply regrets that it has not been possible so far to convene a Conference on the establishment of such a zone, to be attended by States in the region. We are very grateful to the Facilitator and his team and to the Co-Convenors for their tireless efforts and we urge all States in the region to continue to engage in dialogue. The creation of a Zone Free of Nuclear Weapons and all other Weapons of Mass Destruction in the Middle East would make a very significant contribution both to the region but also globally in further strengthening the NPT, it is important that no opportunity is missed to bring about the creation of this Zone.

DPRK

Mr Chairman,

The DPRK represents the most serious nuclear proliferation challenge facing the international community today. Ireland deplores all DPRK nuclear tests and satellite launches using ballistic missile technology, which are in blatant violation of the DPRK’s international obligations. We call upon the DPRK to desist from any further provocative actions and to return to full compliance with its obligations under the NPT and its IAEA safeguards agreements. The international community must continue to urge the DPRK to re-engage in talks on the de-nuclearisation of the Korean peninsula, immediately and without prior conditions.

Syria

Mr Chairman,

We deplore Syria’s undeclared steps towards a nuclear reactor, as set out in a succession of IAEA reports since 2010. We call on Syria to comply with their commitments under their NPT Safeguards Agreement, to cooperate fully and transparently with the IAEA and to sign and ratify the Additional Protocol as soon as possible.
Export Control Regimes

Turning to export controls, Ireland and our EU partners are subject to a comprehensive Code of Conduct on military and dual use exports. This Code of Conduct requires that export licences should be refused if approval would be inconsistent with, inter alia, the non-proliferation provisions of the NPT. We believe that the Code of Conduct represents one of the strongest export control regimes in the world.

Together with many states present here, Ireland is an active participant in a number of export control regimes, whose aim is to counter, curb and prevent the proliferation of nuclear weapons technology, material or know-how.

It is important that our export control arrangements continue to facilitate transfers of technology and equipment for peaceful uses, in conformity with Articles I, II, III and IV of the Treaty. To do this, however, we must be in a position to ensure that such exports do not directly or indirectly facilitate the development of nuclear weapons or other nuclear explosive devices. We take our responsibilities in this area seriously and we encourage other states to do so as well.

IAEA Safeguards

The IAEA’s system of safeguards is of central importance to the nuclear non-proliferation regime. We urge those states which have yet to do so to bring into force Comprehensive Safeguards Agreements and the Additional Protocol as soon as possible.

Ireland fully supports the on-going work of the IAEA in strengthening the effectiveness and improving the efficiency of the IAEA safeguards systems.
Nuclear Safety/CPPNM

Mr Chairman,

In autumn 2015, Ireland will host an IAEA Peer Review Mission. This will be an Integrated Regulatory Peer Review Mission (IRRS) and will look at Ireland’s legal and governmental framework and regulatory infrastructure for safety.

Conclusion

Ireland is steadfast in its commitment to the non-proliferation pillar of the NPT but it must be acknowledged that no pillar of the Treaty stands on its own. The grand bargain of the NPT was struck on the understanding that those states in possession of nuclear weapons would eliminate their arsenals in exchange for the undertaking of all other States Parties not to pursue such weapons.

The failure to start multilateral discussion on nuclear disarmament undermines the NPT’s undoubted achievements on non-proliferation. The international community – including the State parties present here – need to act collectively in moving both processes forward if we are to succeed in strengthening the Treaty.