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Third Session of the Preparatory Committee for the 2010 Review Conference of the Parties to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons

General Debate

Statement by

**Mr. Andreas Launer
Alternate Head of Delegation**

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Check against delivery!

Mr Chairman,

First of all, I would like to congratulate you on your appointment as Chair of the Third Preparatory Committee. I assure you of Austria's full support in your efforts throughout this meeting. This delegation hopes that the third session of the Preparatory Committee will provide a forum for a fruitful and substantive discussion and will help to pave the way for a successful conclusion of the current Review Cycle. In associating herself with the statement made by the EU-Presidency (Czech Republic), Austria wishes to stress a number of points to which we attach particular importance.

Nuclear Disarmament

Mr. Chairman,

Austria fully shares the vision of a world free of weapons of mass destruction. We have long harboured this vision, throughout the Cold War and other periods of great tension, when only a small number of countries possessed the capability to develop nuclear weapons. We continue to strive for this goal now that the proliferation of sensitive nuclear technology has introduced new threats from States and non-State actors alike.

Like others, we see reason for great hope in recent announcements by Nuclear Weapon States, in particular the recent commitment by Presidents Obama and Medvedev to negotiate a new Strategic Arms Reduction Treaty by the end of this year. It is precisely that sort of legally-binding step which is required at this time. We also welcome the commitment to include all nuclear weapon states in this endeavor in due course. Verifiable and irreversible disarmament of nuclear weapons, entry into force of the Comprehensive Nuclear Test Ban Treaty, and agreement on a comprehensive fissile material cut-off treaty are three crucial elements which can lead towards the ultimate goal of the total elimination of nuclear weapons.

Austria endorses the appeal by United Nations Secretary General Ban Ki-moon in October 2008 to consider negotiating a nuclear weapons convention that would prohibit the development, testing, production, stockpiling, transfer, use and threat of use of nuclear weapons, as well as provide for their elimination. The nuclear powers should actively engage with other states on this issue at the Conference on Disarmament in Geneva.

Comprehensive Nuclear Test Ban Treaty (CTBT)

Mr. Chairman,

The entry into force of the Comprehensive Nuclear Test Ban Treaty (CTBT) is long overdue. It is a strong instrument for non-proliferation. It is an important confidence-building and security-building measure, which can facilitate reductions in strategic and non-strategic nuclear weapons, and changes of strategic doctrines.

Together with Costa Rica, Austria has been coordinating the Article XIV process on Facilitating the Entry into Force of the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty (Art. XIV Conference) since September 2007. In this capacity we continue raising awareness about the CTBT and the scientific civil applications of its International Monitoring System such as the tsunami early-warning-system. We hope that a better

understanding of the overall benefits of the CTBT will help speed up the ratification process and its entry into force. To that end we have sponsored outreach activities in many parts of the world. We also co-organized the CTBT Ministerial Meeting in New York on 24 September 2008, at which high-level representatives from more than 90 states, as well as UNSG Ban Ki-moon, former US Defence Secretary William Perry and UN Messenger of Peace Michael Douglas participated. We are honoured that since we have assumed the position of the Co-Chairs with Costa Rica, a considerable number of states have ratified the Treaty raising the total number of ratifying states to 148.

We are strongly encouraged by the recent commitment by President Obama that he "will immediately and aggressively pursue U.S. ratification of the Comprehensive Test Ban Treaty". We hope that other countries will respond to this initiative, and that this might further accelerate efforts towards entry into force. We call on all states that have not yet done so to sign and ratify the CTBT without further delay.

IAEA

Let me highlight the enormously important role of the IAEA for the NPT regime: If to the present day we have not yet reached the mid-1960s' prediction of a world of 15 or more nuclear-weapon states, this is largely due to the untiring verification efforts of this organization. Austria will continue to support all efforts aimed at strengthening and universalizing the IAEA safeguards system including the Additional Protocol and at making the IAEA fit for the increasing challenges in the area of nuclear safety, security, and non-proliferation in the future.

HCOC

The threat posed by weapons of mass destruction rises exponentially with the development of advanced delivery systems. Let me recall, that until we have successfully established a multilateral missile control arrangement within the United Nations the "Hague Code of Conduct against Ballistic Missile Proliferation" of 2002 serves as the only normative multilateral instrument for verification against the proliferation of ballistic missiles. Austria serves as the Executive Secretariat of the Code. We have hosted seven meetings of Subscribing States. More than two-thirds of UN member states subscribed to the Code as called for by UN General Assembly Resolution 60/62 and I hope that more will join. It is paramount, however, that all Subscribing States demonstrate their commitment and contribute positively to all aspects of this confidence building instrument. We call especially on the United States and Russia to demonstrate leadership in this regard.

Multilateralization of the nuclear fuel cycle

Mr. Chairman,

In Austria's view, the dangers related to the increasing access to nuclear technology cannot be ignored for the sake of short-sighted focus on national economic interest, fears of limitation of state sovereignty or loss of control over a key technology sector.

Against this background, Austria is actively participating in the revisited debate on the multilateralization of the nuclear fuel cycle:

One of the most tangible projects so far is the establishment of a nuclear fuel reserve under the control of the IAEA which, initially proposed by the Nuclear Threat Initiative,

is also fully endorsed by the Austrian government and the European Union. This last-resort facility for consumer countries is intended to offer a credible alternative to the development of national enrichment and reprocessing capabilities.

From the Austrian point of view, however, fuel reserve mechanisms can only be a first step in a long journey: As argued by IAEA Director General ElBaradei at the Board of Governors meeting in March 2009, the ultimate goal should be the multilateralization of all new and existing enrichment and reprocessing capabilities. Efforts towards establishing assurances of supply were always envisioned by the IAEA as being the first necessary step on the road to a fuller multilateralization of the fuel cycle, not an end in itself. In order to stimulate further discussions, Austria will circulate at this Prep.Com. a working paper updating its positions and considerations submitted earlier in this Review Cycle.

Mr. Chairman,

We must all work together to reinvigorate our collective efforts and to ensure that this Review Cycle marks a clean break from the last. The NPT as main pillar of the international non-proliferation architecture has proven its effectiveness in the past, and can do so again, as long as the political will exists, and as long as we put our minds to it. Following a number of years of disappointment, we now have grounds to hope that the tide is turning, and that NPT States might be willing to take bold steps to advance the common goal of a successful outcome of the 2010 Review Conference.