



STATEMENT

by

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

General Debate

United Nations
New York

May 5, 2009

(Check against delivery)

Mr Chair,

Allow me to join the others in congratulating you on taking up this important task.

There can be no doubt that the Review Conference next year will be crucial for the NPT's authority. While the treaty has been a cornerstone of our collective security for nearly 40 years, it is under growing strain. We are still facing serious proliferation challenges. Expectations with respect to nuclear disarmament are far from being fulfilled. There has been little progress in establishing regional nuclear weapons free zones, particularly in the Middle East. And there are fears that the right to peaceful use may be undermined.

In short, the broad consensus that was forged at the 1995 Review and Extension Conference has faded. We have lost a decade in our quest for a world without nuclear weapons.

The international community is thus at a crossroads. If we fail next year, like we did in 2005, the NPT runs the risk of gradual erosion and possible marginalisation. Such a development would undermine our common security.

We can, however, avoid this gloomy scenario.

There are new and hopeful windows of opportunity. The recent declaration by Presidents Obama and Medvedev on a follow-on to START is highly encouraging. My delegation welcomes recent statements by nuclear weapons states on their commitment to achieve full elimination of nuclear arms. There is now a momentum, which we must build on.

The prime task of the 2010 Review Conference is to revive a broad-based common understanding on how to address nuclear dangers, and how to ensure that peaceful nuclear applications can be ensured in a more secure world without nuclear weapons. The Review Conference should agree on a programme of work up to 2015, as well as steps to be taken beyond that date.

This PrepCom meeting should lay the foundation for a successful Review Conference next year. We must resolve all the procedural questions. In 2010 we should not waste valuable time discussing issues that this meeting is mandated to resolve. We must agree on an agenda that allows us to deliberate on all matters relevant to the proper functioning of the NPT at the Review Conference.

This meeting is important, but even more critical is the run-up to the Review Conference itself. All States Parties have a responsibility to contribute in a constructive manner. Our preparations must be guided by the spirit of compromise.

If we are to succeed, all States Parties must fulfil their obligations to the NPT. The three pillars are closely inter-linked. There can be no NPT à la carte. Full nuclear disarmament can only be achieved when there is full confidence that no one can circumvent the non-proliferation regime. The much needed steps to tighten up non-proliferation can only be

taken if there is an unequivocal and irreversible process towards complete elimination of existing nuclear arsenals. Strengthened non-proliferation must also facilitate peaceful uses.

If we are to succeed, we must take innovative approaches. We must build bridges; we must reach out across regional groupings and overcome past polarisations. The NPT process must not be considered a zero sum game. The 2010 outcome must be a win-win for all.

Achieving a world free of nuclear weapons will require the mobilisation of all stake-holders. We must fully engage civil society. We should view NGOs and academia as valuable partners in this work.

Finally Mr Chair,

There is a risk that the NPT could be eroded, but this is not a certainty. We have a choice. It is up to us to consolidate and further strengthen this vital treaty. Let us seize this opportunity.