
Conference on Disarmament

17 May 2011

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Letter dated 13 May 2011 from the Permanent Representative of Germany to the Conference on Disarmament addressed to the Deputy Secretary-General of the Conference transmitting the text of the Berlin statement on nuclear disarmament and non-proliferation issued by the Foreign Ministers of Australia, Canada, Chile, Germany, Japan, Mexico, Netherlands, Poland, Turkey and the United Arab Emirates on 30 April 2011

I have the honour to transmit to you on behalf of the “Non-Proliferation and Disarmament Initiative” (NPDI) the text of the Berlin Statement on Nuclear Disarmament and Non-Proliferation, issued by the Foreign Ministers of Australia, Canada, Chile, Germany, Japan, Mexico, the Netherlands, Poland, Turkey and the United Arab Emirates on 30 April 2011.

I would be grateful if the joint statement would be circulated as an official document of the Conference on Disarmament and distributed to all CD member States and non-member States participating in the work of the Conference.

(Signed): Hellmut Hoffmann
Ambassador
Permanent Representative
to the Conference on Disarmament

Berlin statement by Foreign Ministers on nuclear disarmament and non-proliferation

1. We, the Foreign Ministers of Australia, Canada, Chile, Germany, Japan, Mexico, the Netherlands, Poland, Turkey and the United Arab Emirates reaffirm our joint intention to work towards achieving nuclear disarmament and a strengthening of the international non-proliferation regime, as set out in the joint statement adopted at our first meeting in New York on September 22, 2010. Recognizing the danger to humanity posed by the possibility of the use of nuclear weapons and the necessity to address increased proliferation risks, to decrease nuclear arsenals, to strengthen nuclear security and to improve nuclear safety, we consider it urgent to reduce nuclear risks and achieve tangible progress on the path towards a world free of nuclear weapons.

2. We base our efforts on the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT) as the essential foundation for the achievement of nuclear disarmament, the cornerstone of the global nuclear non-proliferation regime, and the basis for the development of the peaceful uses of nuclear energy. The consensus outcome of the NPT Review Conference 2010 sets a practical agenda with an Action plan covering all three pillars of the Treaty, as well as the objective of a Middle East free of nuclear weapons and all other weapons of mass destruction. We are determined to promote and support implementation of the commitments made by all NPT member states, and advocate further progress through practical contributions and proposals.

3. We welcome and support the renewed call for the total elimination of nuclear weapons as the only guarantee against their use or threat of use, and consequently see the need to further reduce the numbers of nuclear weapons as well as their role in security strategies, concepts, doctrines and policies. We are encouraged by recent developments, in particular the entry-into-force of the US-Russian New START Treaty and the stated intention of both parties to continue the process of reductions, stressing the need to include all categories of nuclear weapons. We strongly hope that all other states possessing nuclear weapons will follow suit, while applying the principles of irreversibility, verifiability and transparency to the nuclear disarmament process.

4. We recognize States parties' right to develop and use nuclear energy for peaceful purposes as embodied in the NPT. We join the international call for elevating the safety of nuclear power plants to the highest level and strengthening nuclear safety measures worldwide in view of the recent events at the Fukushima Daiichi Nuclear Power Plant. We support the discussions which have begun already at national and regional levels as well as at international fora and organizations, in particular the IAEA. We welcome the invitation by IAEA Director General Amano to a Ministerial Conference on Nuclear Safety to be held in Vienna from June 20 to 24, 2011.

5. Now is the time to revitalize and reinforce multilateral efforts, recognizing that today's global security problems more than ever require co-operative and multilateral solutions. Many items of the agenda laid out in the Action plan of the 2010 NPT Review Conference can only be implemented through a successful multilateral effort. For more than a decade, the multilateral disarmament machinery has not lived up to the expectations of the international community in addressing pressing security challenges through effective multilateral arms control and disarmament, foregoing enormous possibilities to promote international stability, facilitate development and increase security for all. The message from the high-level-meeting convened by the UN Secretary General on 24 September 2010 in New York is clear: the international community will not accept more time being lost. We are united in the demand to revitalize the multilateral disarmament machinery.

6. The consensus reached last year by the NPT Review Conference on the forward-looking Action plan proves that co-operative, multilateral disarmament and non-proliferation efforts can work if there is the necessary political will. Our objective is to maintain the momentum of that successful outcome and to expedite its implementation. With that purpose we have adopted the following concrete proposals for action on key elements of the Action plan.

Proposal I: There is consensus among NPT member states that the production of fissile material for nuclear weapons must be stopped. A Fissile Material Cut-off Treaty (FMCT) would curb the risk of future nuclear arms races and reduce the danger of non-state actors getting such material into their hands. Such a treaty would complement ongoing efforts to secure vulnerable nuclear material across the globe. It is an indispensable step on the way towards a nuclear weapon free world. We are deeply disappointed that one year after the NPT Review Conference, which called in its Action plan for the immediate negotiation of an FMCT in the Conference on Disarmament, this has not been implemented. While acknowledging that the security requirements of all states must be addressed in the course of negotiations, we underline that there is no reason and no excuse for further delay.

On 26 January, United Nations Secretary General Ban Ki-moon called for the establishment of informal processes to help build confidence for an FMCT and return the CD to its program of work. We have initiated intensive efforts to overcome the current deadlock. In Geneva, in the margins of the CD, Australia and Japan are co-hosting a series of discussions among experts to examine technical aspects of an FMCT in order to build momentum towards negotiations. Working in Vienna, in an effort led by Germany, we have developed a paper on the effective verification of an FMCT, which lists questions to be addressed by scientific experts and contains input for their deliberations. We consider that the establishment of a group of scientific experts with the assignment to examine technical aspects of an FMCT could facilitate and contribute to the start of negotiations.

Building on those initiatives we will continue to press for the immediate commencement of negotiations. Our preference remains to negotiate an FMCT within the CD. However, if the CD, in its 2011 substantive session, remains unable to find agreement on launching FMCT negotiations, we will ask the UN General Assembly, which is already seized of the matter under agenda item 162 entitled "Follow-up to the high-level meeting held on 24 September 2010: Revitalizing the work of the Conference on Disarmament and taking forward multilateral disarmament negotiations", to address the issue and consider ways to proceed with the aim of beginning negotiations.

Proposal II: Entry-into-force of the Comprehensive Nuclear Test Ban Treaty (CTBT) is another major objective on the multilateral agenda. We call on all States which have not yet done so to sign and ratify the CTBT. We are encouraged by the commitment expressed by the United States and by Indonesia to ensure ratification of the Treaty. We believe that an effective end to nuclear testing will enhance and not weaken our national as well as global security and would significantly bolster the global non-proliferation and disarmament regime. 15 years ago the Treaty was opened for signature, and the number of signatories and ratifications has steadily increased. We are committed to universalizing the Treaty and to promoting its early entry-into-force. Utilizing various diplomatic opportunities we will urge states that have not done so to sign and ratify the Treaty and promptly complete the steps necessary to bring it into force. We are committed to support the Preparatory Commission of the CTBT-Organization in setting up an effective monitoring and verification system and commend the work already accomplished.

Proposal III: At the 2010 NPT Review Conference, the nuclear weapon states committed themselves to accelerate progress on concrete steps leading to nuclear disarmament, and to report back to NPT member states. Additionally, as a confidence-building measure, the Conference encouraged the nuclear weapon states to agree as soon as possible on a standard reporting form. We are developing a draft of a standard reporting form which could be used by the nuclear weapon states in meeting that commitment. We will invite the nuclear weapon states to examine our proposal at their Paris meeting in June. It sets out our expectations regarding information that we would like to see all states possessing nuclear weapons provide. We believe that reporting on the basis of a standardized format, as encouraged in the Action plan adopted by the Review Conference, would build international confidence and help to create a climate conducive to further disarmament. We consider it essential to increase transparency and accountability in the nuclear disarmament process.

Proposal IV: We underline that an effective non-proliferation regime is a joint security interest of all nations. We recognize the important role of the IAEA in verifying states' compliance with their nuclear non-proliferation obligations. We highlight the fact that with the entry into force of the IAEA Additional Protocols for the United Arab Emirates in December 2010 and for Mexico in March 2011, all countries belonging to our cross-regional initiative implement Comprehensive Safeguards Agreements and Additional Protocols, which we regard as the necessary verification standard. We call on all states, in line with the Action Plan of the 2010 NPT Review Conference, to conclude and bring into force Additional Protocols in order to give the IAEA the additional authority it needs credibly to deter and detect violations of non-proliferation obligations. We will continue to advocate bilaterally and multilaterally for the universal application of the Additional Protocol in our respective regions. We offer to share experiences and best practices in the conclusion and implementation of the Additional Protocol with all interested parties, and are ready to provide legal, and other, assistance.

7. We will take stock of progress on today's proposals at our next meeting in the margins of the UN General Assembly in September. The 2012 ministerial meeting of our initiative will be hosted by Turkey.

We will continue to work on other key items of the Action plan adopted by the 2010 NPT Review Conference, as identified in our joint statement of September 22, 2010. In particular, we intend to promote the establishment of internationally recognized nuclear-weapon-free-zones, on the basis of arrangements freely arrived at among states of the region concerned, and in accordance with the 1999 Guidelines of the UN Disarmament Commission, convinced that such zones strengthen global as well as regional peace and security, reinforce the nuclear non-proliferation regime and contribute to the achievement of nuclear disarmament. In this respect, we underline the crucial need to promote the creation of a zone free of nuclear weapons and all other weapons of mass destruction in the Middle East, in line with pending requirements for the organization in 2012 of the special conference agreed at the 2010 NPT Review Conference.

We will also work on specific actions aimed at reinforcing states' export control systems which play an important non-proliferation role.

We will actively promote disarmament and non-proliferation education, based on our conviction that education is a powerful tool for mobilizing further disarmament and non-proliferation efforts globally by enhancing awareness and understanding among our citizens.

8. We are encouraged by the interest our initiative has met across regions and groupings. We are grateful to all states who want to join our efforts and support our proposals. Only such a broad effort will succeed in building the necessary bridges and in achieving meaningful progress towards the mutually reinforcing objectives of nuclear disarmament and non-proliferation.

Berlin, 30 April 2011
