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# Preparatory Committee for the 2020 Review Conference of the Parties to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons

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## First session

2-12 May 2017

### Summary record (partial)\* of the 4th meeting

Held at the Vienna International Centre, Vienna, on Wednesday, 3 May 2017, at 3 p.m.

*Chair:* Mr. van der Kwast . . . . . (Netherlands)

## Contents

General debate on issues related to all aspects of the work of the Preparatory  
Committee (*continued*)

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\* No summary record was prepared for the rest of the meeting.

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*The meeting was called to order at 3.10 p.m.*

**General debate on issues related to all aspects of the work of the Preparatory Committee** (*continued*)

1. **Mr. Biontino** (Germany), speaking on behalf of the Non-Proliferation and Disarmament Initiative, said that the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons remained the cornerstone of the global nuclear non-proliferation regime and the indispensable basis for developing the peaceful uses of nuclear technology. In accordance with article VI of the Treaty, all nuclear-weapon States should eliminate their nuclear arsenals and provide regular reports on the implementation of their nuclear disarmament obligations.

2. The Initiative welcomed the establishment of a high-level fissile material cut-off treaty expert preparatory group and also supported the establishment of a group of governmental experts on nuclear disarmament verification. Verification, along with transparency and irreversibility, was a fundamental principle of disarmament, as outlined in the action plan contained in the Final Document of the 2010 Review Conference of the Parties to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons. International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) comprehensive safeguards continued to be the international verification standard and export controls played a crucial role in the fulfilment of nuclear non-proliferation obligations under the Treaty.

3. The Initiative strongly condemned the development by North Korea of its nuclear weapon and ballistic missile programmes, which undermined the Treaty and the global non-proliferation regime and also posed a grave threat to regional stability and international peace and security. North Korea must take concrete steps to honour its commitments under the Joint Statement of the Fourth Round of the Six-Party Talks; comply with its obligations under all relevant Security Council resolutions; abandon all nuclear weapons and nuclear programmes in a complete, verifiable and irreversible manner; and return to compliance with its IAEA safeguards agreement and with the Non-Proliferation Treaty.

4. The joint comprehensive plan of action was an example of successful Middle Eastern diplomacy and a testimony to the relevance of the Non-Proliferation Treaty. The Initiative commended IAEA for its ongoing efforts to monitor and verify the implementation by Iran of its commitments under that plan of action.

5. All States parties to the Treaty who met their non-proliferation obligations had a right to unfettered

access to nuclear technology. The Initiative therefore called on those States with the greatest nuclear expertise to share it, particularly with those States facing the most urgent development needs.

6. Lastly, the Initiative stressed the importance of raising awareness of the humanitarian impact of the use of nuclear weapons. Such endeavours should continue, including practical steps to implement the recommendations contained in the report of the Secretary-General on the United Nations study on disarmament and non-proliferation education (A/57/124).

7. **Ms. Battungalag** (Mongolia) said that the Non-Proliferation Treaty remained the cornerstone of the global nuclear disarmament and non-proliferation regime and Mongolia was firmly committed to efforts aimed at strengthening international peace and security. It was therefore regrettable that the 2015 Review Conference had not reached a consensus. The partial implementation of the action plan of the 2010 Review Conference and the current geopolitical situation meant that the Treaty needed to be strengthened in each of its three pillars, namely nuclear non-proliferation, nuclear disarmament and the right to peaceful use of nuclear technology.

8. The Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty was a catalyst for nuclear disarmament and a strong non-proliferation instrument and thus should be brought into force as soon as possible. IAEA continued to play a central role in promoting non-proliferation through its safeguards system and verification. IAEA technical cooperation projects in Mongolia demonstrated that the Agency contributed to global development efforts by providing training and equipment.

9. It was an indisputable fact that nuclear-weapon-free zones strengthened both nuclear disarmament and non-proliferation. Mongolia therefore strongly supported strengthening such zones. The nuclear-weapon-free status of Mongolia for the past 25 years enjoyed broad international recognition and had bolstered its international security.

10. **Mr. Bandjov** (Bulgaria) said that his country was committed to actively supporting the full implementation and universalization of the Non-Proliferation Treaty, whose three pillars were equally important and mutually reinforcing. The most realistic way to achieve effective, verifiable and irreversible nuclear disarmament was through a progressive approach. Immediate objectives should be reasonable and it should be recognized that a favourable security environment had been the

precondition for previous progress in nuclear disarmament.

11. Bulgaria had ratified the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty and supported the conclusion of a treaty that would ban the production of fissile material for nuclear weapons or other nuclear explosive devices. The work of the high-level fissile material cut-off treaty expert preparatory group should enable the Conference on Disarmament to begin negotiations on that instrument as soon as possible.

12. IAEA played a key role in promoting the three pillars of the Non-Proliferation Treaty and should remain credible, professional and well-funded so that it could perform its duties. Bulgaria also supported the Treaty between the United States of America and the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics on the Elimination of Their Intermediate-Range and Shorter-Range Missiles (Intermediate-Range Nuclear Forces Treaty), given its importance for the security of Europe.

13. Bulgaria strongly condemned the nuclear and ballistic missile tests carried out by the Democratic People's Republic of Korea, which violated multiple Security Council resolutions and posed a serious threat to global peace and security. Non-compliance by Syria with its safeguards agreement was another matter of concern and the authorities in Damascus were urged to take immediate steps to conclude an additional protocol. However, the progress made in the implementation of the joint comprehensive plan of action agreed with Iran was a welcome development.

14. **Mr. Estrada Roman** (Nicaragua) said that, as a State party to the Non-Proliferation Treaty, his country was committed to adopting effective measures to achieve a world free of nuclear weapons. The President of Nicaragua had reaffirmed that principle on numerous occasions and had recalled that Nicaragua was a party to the zone of peace declared by the Community of Latin American and Caribbean States and a member of the first nuclear-weapon-free zone in the world. Non-nuclear-weapon States had a legal and moral obligation to avert such humanitarian catastrophes as those that had taken place in Hiroshima and Nagasaki, and Nicaragua expressed its solidarity with people of Japan and the living witnesses to the consequences of the use of such arms.

15. All States had a sovereign right to adopt security measures within their own territory, while bearing in mind the need to respect the rights of others to life, peace and security. Nicaragua was greatly concerned by recent events on the Korean Peninsula and condemned the new ballistic missile test by the Democratic People's Republic of Korea. Nicaragua

was in favour of nuclear disarmament and hoped that all parties would employ dialogue to resolve their differences peacefully. Nicaragua had always condemned tests by nuclear-weapon States and reiterated its urgent call for nuclear military programmes on the Korean Peninsula to be abandoned.

16. **Mr. Al Thani** (Qatar) said that nuclear weapons increasingly figured in the military and security doctrines of many States and that the risk of a catastrophic nuclear event had escalated, developments which were of grave concern to the international community. However there were hopeful signs. Since 2010, the international community had become more aware of the need for tangible steps towards a nuclear-free world. Particularly noteworthy was the initiative under discussion in the General Assembly on accelerating the implementation of nuclear disarmament commitments. Also noteworthy were the international conferences on the humanitarian impact of nuclear weapons held in Oslo, in Nayarit, Mexico, and in Vienna.

17. Given the failure to reach consensus on a final document of the 2015 Review Conference, expectations for the 2020 Review Conference were high. There was a rich store of proposals and initiatives that would bring progress towards the full implementation of the Non-Proliferation Treaty, an end to the nuclear arms race and the elimination of nuclear weapons under strong and effective international controls. Joint action was needed to achieve substantive progress according to the shared responsibilities of both nuclear-weapon States and non-nuclear-weapon States.

18. The Middle East had been singled out in the resolution on the Middle East adopted at the 1995 Review and Extension Conference of the Parties to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons. All appropriate steps should be taken towards the creation of a Middle East zone free of nuclear weapons and all other weapons of mass destruction, and all nuclear facilities in the region should be subject to IAEA comprehensive safeguards.

19. **Ms. Plejić Marković** (Croatia) said that non-proliferation, nuclear disarmament and the peaceful uses of nuclear energy were the three equally important and mutually reinforcing pillars of the Treaty. In that regard, the measures identified in the action plan of the 2010 Review Conference remained valid and their full implementation would bring the international community closer to achieving the goal of a world without nuclear weapons.

20. IAEA had played a central role in strengthening the international security architecture. While article IV of the Non-Proliferation Treaty granted all States parties the right to use nuclear energy for peaceful purposes, it was important for the Agency to ensure that all safety and security norms were rigorously observed. Croatia supported strengthening the effectiveness of the IAEA safeguards system, which played an essential role in implementing non-proliferation commitments under the Treaty. It also called for the universalization of comprehensive safeguards agreements and additional protocols.

21. Croatia supported the Convention on the Physical Protection of Nuclear Material and Nuclear Facilities and called on all States with nuclear facilities to ratify the Convention on Nuclear Safety and the Joint Convention on the Safety of Spent Fuel Management and on the Safety of Radioactive Waste Management. Another important nuclear disarmament instrument was the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty, whose entry into force and universalization remained a security priority. That Treaty's monitoring and verification system was testament to global non-proliferation and scientific cooperation, but continued efforts were necessary to bring it into force.

22. Security Council resolutions 1540 (2004) and 2325(2016) were important milestones in the efforts to curb proliferation. The nuclear tests and missile launches carried out by the Democratic People's Republic of North Korea posed a global threat and challenged the international order, and Croatia therefore called on that State to comply with its international obligations and engage meaningfully with the international community.

23. **Mr. Seokolo** (South Africa) said that his country shared the deep concerns expressed by the vast majority of States parties to the Non-Proliferation Treaty about the catastrophic humanitarian consequences that would arise from the denotation of nuclear weapons, whether by accident, miscalculation or design. Nuclear weapons did not guarantee security but rather detracted from it and, as long as they existed, humanity would continue to face the threat of mass annihilation. Recent developments on the Korean Peninsula had demonstrated that the threat of the use of nuclear weapons was real and imminent, and it was therefore imperative to eliminate them altogether.

24. The Final Document of the 2010 Review Conference had not restored the confidence of States parties, and most remained concerned about the lack of progress made towards nuclear disarmament, although some modest progress had been made in reducing the

number of strategically deployed nuclear weapons pursuant to the Treaty between the United States of America and the Russian Federation on Measures for the Further Reduction and Limitation of Strategic Offensive Arms (New START Treaty). Continued reliance on nuclear weapons had led to increased insecurity among non-nuclear-weapon States. Pending the total elimination of such weapons, nuclear-weapon States should provide effective, unconditional and legally binding security assurances to non-nuclear-weapon States.

25. South Africa supported the strengthened IAEA safeguards system, which would greatly facilitate the transfer of nuclear technology to developing countries. It also supported the establishment of new nuclear-weapon-free zones and regretted the lack of progress towards the establishment of such a zone in the Middle East. The progress made towards the implementation of the joint comprehensive plan of action with Iran was however welcome.

26. Article IV of the Non-Proliferation Treaty, which guaranteed the inalienable right of all States to develop research, production and use of nuclear energy for peaceful purposes without discrimination, was of particular relevance to Africa, given its need for adequate energy supplies to fuel sustainable growth. In addition, South Africa recognized the growing role of IAEA in providing technical cooperation to developing countries, particularly in Africa, and in contributing to the achievement of the Sustainable Development Goals.

27. **Mr. Youssef** (Egypt) said that a series of alarming global events had posed a direct challenge to the non-proliferation regime. While the Treaty had significantly limited the horizontal proliferation of nuclear weapons, it had not adequately addressed their vertical proliferation. Egypt was seriously concerned by the readiness of certain States parties, particularly the nuclear-weapon States, to offer nuclear technological assistance to States that were not parties to the Non-Proliferation Treaty, which reduced incentive for them to ratify the Treaty.

28. Since 1995, a number of Review Conferences had addressed the establishment of a zone free of nuclear weapons in the Middle East. Regrettably, the establishment of such a zone had not come to pass, despite the 1995 resolution on the Middle East, which had provided the basis for the indefinite extension of the Non-Proliferation Treaty. Achieving that outcome must therefore remain a central issue for the 2020 Review Conference, and the three sponsors of the

resolution had a special responsibility to see that it was implemented.

29. Although previous Review Conferences had reaffirmed the importance of the accession of Israel to the Non-Proliferation Treaty, no progress had been achieved on that issue. The current review cycle should demand that Israel accede to the Treaty without any preconditions or further delay as a non-nuclear-weapon State and subject its nuclear facilities to the IAEA full-scope safeguards.

30. **Mr. Maresca** (Observer for the International Committee of the Red Cross) said that eminent security and military experts had concluded that the risk of the use of nuclear weapons had reached levels not seen since the Cold War. Distrust was growing among major military Powers, and tensions and acts of provocation were increasing in some regions. Those factors raised serious concern that escalation and miscalculation could lead to the intentional or accidental use of nuclear weapons. In addition, cyber threats to nuclear control could not be ignored.

31. Nuclear-weapon States must take three practical steps, which derived from their existing commitments, to reduce the nuclear risks. Firstly, as outlined in the action plan of the 2010 Review Conference, they must reduce the risk of accidental use of nuclear weapons by taking nuclear weapons off “hair-trigger” alert. Secondly, they must diminish the role of nuclear weapons in national security stances. Progressively reducing that role would not only reduce the risk of accidental or intentional use, but would also decrease military reliance on nuclear weapons and create the conditions for their elimination. Reports that some States were modernizing their arsenals were at odds with such commitments. Thirdly, they should agree to confidence-building measures aimed at reducing the chances of deliberate or inadvertent use of nuclear weapons.

32. Ultimately, the only way to ensure that nuclear weapons were never used again was to prohibit and eliminate them. All States should therefore participate in the negotiations taking place in the General Assembly to establish a treaty to prohibit nuclear weapons, leading to their complete elimination. States that were not ready to join those negotiations should focus on fulfilling their risk-reduction commitments.

*The meeting rose at 6.15 p.m.*