

**Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons 2020 Review Cycle:
Second Session of the Preparatory Committee**

**Statement by Ms Izumi Nakamitsu, High representative for Disarmament
Affairs**

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Ambassador Adam Bugajski, Chair of the Preparatory Committee

Distinguished delegates

Excellencies, ladies and gentlemen

At the outset I would like to congratulate Ambassador Bugajski on his assumption of the Chair and reiterate that you have both my full support and the full support of the Office for Disarmament Affairs in seeking a successful conclusion to this Preparatory Committee session.

I also wish convey to you the greetings of the Secretary-General. As many of you know, Secretary-General Guterres is currently developing his agenda for disarmament, which is aimed at re-energizing the international discourse. It will seek to offer new perspectives on the traditional agenda in order to mobilize new constituencies. It will seek to identify areas where more coherent and collaborative efforts within the United Nations system can better support Member States' responsibilities for advancing disarmament.

On the matter of nuclear weapons, the Secretary-General is exploring how he can use his moral authority to support our common norms against nuclear weapons, including against any proliferation, testing or use. He also intends to seek ways of facilitating the resumption of dialogue on strategic arms control and disarmament as well as the promotion of practical measures to prepare for a world free of nuclear weapons. Our perspective will be grounded in the conviction that the humanitarian and security considerations are not mutually exclusive and should continue to underpin and lend urgency to all the efforts of the international community.

Excellencies, ladies and gentlemen,

On the first of July fifty years ago, following three years of intensive negotiations, this treaty opened for signature. It was the product of fears about the impact that nuclear proliferation would have on disarmament efforts, and the need to pursue urgent effective measures to facilitate further steps leading to the elimination of nuclear arsenals.

Half a century later the NPT has transcended its initial purpose and has become a core component of our international architecture – the cornerstone of the non-proliferation regime and an essential framework for the pursuit of nuclear disarmament. Its near universal membership, legally binding commitment to disarmament and verifiable non-proliferation safeguards undergird its status as one of the most successful and credible multilateral security instruments.

That success and that credibility cannot and should not be taken for granted.

The world today faces similar challenges to the context that gave birth to the NPT. The threat of the use – intentional or otherwise – of nuclear weapons is growing. This threat, which concerns all humanity, will remain for as long as nuclear weapons continue to exist in national arsenals.

The geopolitical environment is deteriorating. Some of the most important instruments and agreements that comprise our collective security framework are being eroded. Rhetoric about the necessity and utility of nuclear weapons is on the rise. Modernization programmes by nuclear-weapon States are leading to what many see as a new qualitative arms race.

Over the past seven decades and until recently, the major powers were engaged in continuous and successive negotiations on arms control and disarmament. Yet, not only have we seen an unfortunate hiatus in these efforts, there are real concerns that unless we reverse this trend we will soon be back in a situation for the first time in which there are no verified constraints on nuclear arsenals.

Thankfully, not all current situations involving nuclear non-proliferation and disarmament are equally bleak. The Secretary-General has wholeheartedly welcomed the recent positive developments on the Korean Peninsula, including, among others, the re-commitment of the Democratic People's Republic of Korea to denuclearization, the establishment of an Inter-Korean hotline and the steps taken to improve Inter-Korean relations.

The decision by the DPRK to suspend nuclear tests and launches of intercontinental ballistic missiles, and to dismantle its nuclear test site, are welcome developments which we hope will contribute to building trust and to sustaining an atmosphere for sincere dialogue and negotiations. The Secretary-General looks forward to a positive outcome of the Inter-Korean Summit and hopes for early agreement on a framework for the resumption of negotiations leading to verifiable denuclearization and sustainable peace on the Korean Peninsula.

Turning to another region, the Secretary-General remains convinced that the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action continues to be the best way to ensure the exclusively peaceful nature of Iran's nuclear programme and to realize the promised tangible economic benefits for the Iranian people. We hope that all of its participants remain fully committed to its implementation and long-term preservation.

Excellencies, ladies and gentlemen,

Your task over the next two weeks is, primarily, to seed the ground for a successful Review Conference in 2020 – the year of the fiftieth anniversary of the NPT's entry into force. In doing so you will need to identify and return to the common path that has been painstakingly built over the last five decades.

It is also important to remember, up front, that efforts to maintain the health of the treaty and produce a successful review cycle are not undertaken as ends in and of themselves. They are undertaken because a strong and credible NPT is vital to enhancing our collective security as an international community.

It is my hope that your deliberations over the coming weeks will be conducted in a spirit of seeking mutual benefit and common purpose, and that your discussions are carried forward in a constructive fashion.

I also encourage you to act with alacrity – 2020 is only two years away and a successful outcome requires action now. The nuclear-weapon States have a responsibility to lead when it comes to nuclear disarmament, but all States parties share an obligation to take the necessary actions that will ensure the full implementation and future health of the NPT.

I wish you the best of luck with your session.

Thank you.