

CHECK AGAINST DELIVERY!

Statement

by Susanne Baumann,

Head of the Delegation of the Federal Republic of Germany

and

Deputy Federal Government Commissioner for
Disarmament and Arms Control

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2020 Review Conference of the Parties to the Treaty on the
Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons,

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Mr. Chairman,

please let me congratulate you to your election to the Chair and assure you of Germany's full support and cooperation. [I would also like to align myself with the Statements to be delivered by the European Union and the Non-Proliferation and Disarmament Initiative.]

As we approach the NPT's 50th anniversary this year, it is high time to take a step back from the challenges and realities of the 21st century and remind ourselves of the huge historic contribution of the NPT to peace and security worldwide. What began in 1968 with the signing of the Non-Proliferation Treaty, has evolved over time into a solid, sophisticated and successful nuclear non-proliferation and disarmament regime which has achieved its goal in preventing a spread of nuclear weapons and discouraging many states from pursuing nuclear options.

Germany deeply values the NPT for having anchored the principle of non-proliferation in international security policy. Over time, we all have strengthened the NPT by signing up and implementing nuclear safeguards to prevent the diversion of nuclear material. We encourage all NPT members to use this Review Cycle to even further strengthen the non-proliferation regime by promoting the Additional Protocol, together with Comprehensive Safeguards Agreements, as the gold standard of nuclear safeguards.

However, it cannot be denied that the non-proliferation regime is currently faced with many challenges: North Korea's illegal quest for nuclear weapons remains the biggest proliferation crisis to date and a huge threat to international peace and security. While we need to counter to the challenges the DPRK's nuclear and ballistic missile programmes pose to the NPT, we should strongly support ongoing diplomatic efforts aimed at finding a way out of this nuclear crisis, including through maintaining the pressure campaign. Ultimately, a diplomatic solution will have to comprise concrete, verifiable and irreversible steps leading to denuclearization and an unequivocal return of the DPRK to the NPT as the cornerstone of the international disarmament and non-proliferation architecture. In this context, Germany calls upon all States still outside the NPT to join the Treaty as Non-Nuclear Weapon States.

The Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action agreed between the E3/EU+3 and Iran shows that it is possible to arrive at comprehensive diplomatic solutions for major nuclear proliferation crises. The JCPoA ensures that Iran's nuclear programme can only serve peaceful purposes based on tight restrictions of Iran's nuclear programme as well as the strictest IAEA monitoring and verification regime in the world.

Germany stands firmly committed to the preservation and continued full and effective implementation of the JCPoA by all participants.

These days, the dangers of proliferation are also real when it comes to other Weapons of Mass Destruction. We are appalled by the repeated use of chemical weapons in Syria, thereby breaking the long-standing taboo of not using Weapons of Mass Destruction as a means of warfare. There cannot be impunity for those responsible for the use of chemical weapons in Syria and elsewhere.

We are concerned about other violations of existing arms control agreements and the new attractiveness of nuclear weapons in other parts of the world as well:

US-Russian nuclear arms control has been at the backbone for all efforts to reduce and restrict nuclear armament for many years and yielded major security benefits, in particular for Europe. We are deeply concerned about Russia's obvious disregard for arms control agreements while at the same time seeking new conventional as well as nuclear military capabilities. We call on Russia to allay all doubts regarding its compliance with the INF treaty and on the US and Russia to do everything to continue their dialogue including on strategic stability. Germany will host a side-event on the current state of strategic arms control presenting the results and recommendations of the trilateral US-Russian-German Deep Cuts-Commission on May, 2nd.

Because of the current security situation and the threat to non-proliferation Germany pursues an ambitious nuclear disarmament agenda. We are convinced that not only defense and deterrence but also disarmament and arms control can contribute to our all security.

To come closer to our collective goal of a world free of nuclear weapons we call on Washington and Moscow to further reduce their nuclear arsenals and to start negotiations on the prolongation of the New START Treaty being well aware that this requires first and foremost trust and full compliance with the existing treaties.

There are other elements, political and technical ones, which could help improve the framework for any future disarmament steps, bilateral as well as multilateral ones:

A prohibition on producing Fissile Material for weapons would be a major breakthrough strengthening both effective non-proliferation as well as contributing, at least over time, to nuclear disarmament. That is why Germany, together with Canada and the Netherlands, initiated a new High-level FMCT Expert Group which strives to prepare and advance the beginning of real negotiations of an FMCT.

We also want to see the CTBT enter into force and see much value in the work of the IMS to detect nuclear tests: for sure now, but also in a distant future when the CTBTO would still be needed to monitor the absence of atomic testing even in a nuclear-weapons free world.

Moreover, a robust and credible verification regime of concrete nuclear disarmament measures is needed. We are actively engaged in the International Partnership for Nuclear Disarmament Verification Initiative (IPNDV) as in other international efforts aimed at devising instruments for nuclear disarmament verification.

All of these measures presuppose trust between Partners and a cooperative setting based on reciprocity. This is also true with regard to the so-called Negative Security Assurances which have played an important role in establishing confidence in the nuclear non-proliferation regime and in diminishing the role and prominence of nuclear weapons in national doctrines. Germany thinks that – after the breach of the Budapest Memorandum by Russia in connection with its illegal annexation of Crimea - it would be timely to take a fresh look at these assurances and discuss whether Negative Security Assurances should not be reaffirmed and possibly strengthened in order to increase the role they can play for the credibility and legitimacy of the non-proliferation regime as such.

Together with our partners from the Non-Proliferation and Disarmament Initiative (NPDI), Germany remains committed to promoting these and other concrete steps in order to advance implementation of the NPT across all its three pillars which are interrelated and mutually reinforcing.

Finally, on the third pillar of the NPT, mutual trust is of paramount importance: The right to use nuclear energy for peaceful purposes is a precondition for the worldwide acceptance of the Treaty. Although there are many benefits of peaceful uses, it has also become clear that the use of nuclear energy involves considerable risks. They concern all of us. Those who do not opt for the use of nuclear energy must be assured that those who do maintain the highest standards in nuclear safety and security and a rigid application of safeguards.

Germany commends the IAEA for its crucial and invaluable work regarding the peaceful use of nuclear energy, including through its safeguards-system. Germany is, at present, the fourth largest contributor to the IAEA's budget and has been operating its IAEA safeguards support programme for 40 years. Germany is also a major voluntary contributor to the Nuclear Security Fund.

Nuclear security is a truly global challenge since the threat of nuclear terrorism has reached global dimensions.

The Nuclear Security Summit process has drawn global attention to these challenges. They require our continued attention and action, not only on a national scale, but also in the framework of the relevant international bodies and organizations, with the IAEA in its central coordinating role.

The deteriorating security environment, the erosion of our arms control and non-proliferation architecture which was a

guardian of peace and security for many decades, the emergence of new technologies and threats with implications for warfare which we cannot even oversee today: all this makes it even more important to do everything to defend and strengthen the NPT.

The Preparatory Committee should make recommendations on areas where further action is required with a view to turning this new Review Cycle into a success story for the NPT.

The German delegation stands ready to work with all parties to this end.

Thank you.