

2018 Preparatory Committee for the 2020 Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty Review Conference

April 23 – May 4, 2018, Geneva

**Statement by Bulgaria
General Debate, 23 April 2018**

Mr. Chairman,

Let me first congratulate you on your appointment as Chair of the second session of the Preparatory Committee for the 2020 NPT Review Conference and assure you of the full support of our delegation. We commend you for the dedicated efforts and thorough preparation of this meeting and for the extensive outreach. Your balanced, objective and inclusive approach is an important asset in building a constructive atmosphere during the deliberations in the next two weeks.

Bulgaria fully aligns itself with the statement delivered by the EU. We also fully support the statement on the Progressive Approach to be made by Australia on behalf of 28 states. Several elements will be elaborated from national perspective.

I will start with reiterating the key importance that Bulgaria attaches to the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty as a cornerstone of the global nuclear non-proliferation regime, the essential foundation for the pursuit of nuclear disarmament and a framework for peaceful use of nuclear energy. We are committed to the full implementation of the NPT in all three pillars and to its universalization. A lot has been achieved in implementing and strengthening the NPT which has contributed to the peace and security in an unparalleled manner. Yet, we all have the responsibility to further reinforce and uphold the NPT regime. We have to make maximum use of the current review cycle to build a positive and realistic approach that will reaffirm the validity of the NPT and address the current challenges in disarmament and nuclear non-proliferation.

Bulgaria is fully committed to the goal of peaceful and secure world free of nuclear weapons. The legal framework to pursue this objective is provided by the NPT and its Article VI. For us the only realistic way to attain the goal of effective, verifiable and irreversible nuclear disarmament is through progressive approach based on practical and doable steps, with due consideration of the complex security environment and the strategic context. Effective measures towards a world without nuclear weapons could be achieved only through gradual and inclusive approach with active participation of nuclear weapons' states.

This approach encompasses parallel steps, necessary to achieve a world free of nuclear weapons. Among them is the entry into force of the CTBT. As an Annex II country, Bulgaria has signed and ratified the Treaty thus bringing it closer to a full legal standing. We call upon all States, in particular the remaining Annex II states, to sign and ratify the CTBT without further delay.

Another priority is the commencement of negotiations on a Fissile Material Cut-off Treaty (FMCT), which would further the implementation of the NPT and its Article VI and reinforce non-proliferation norms and obligations. We appreciate the work of the High-Level FMCT Expert Preparatory Group that aims at advancing the prospects to start negotiations. Meanwhile, there is a need for all states possessing nuclear weapons that have not yet done so, to declare and

maintain moratoria on the production of fissile material for nuclear weapons and other nuclear explosive devices.

Initiatives in the nuclear disarmament verification area are vital for the advancement of nuclear disarmament and for establishing confidence. We welcome the imminent start of the work of the Group of Governmental Experts on verification as well as the ongoing work in other fora, such as the International Partnership for Nuclear Disarmament Verification (IPNDV).

We encourage further reduction of strategic and non-strategic nuclear weapons stockpiles as a practical step towards global nuclear disarmament. The preserving of the Intermediate-Range Nuclear Forces Treaty (INF) is of great importance for the security of Europe and beyond.

The proliferation of nuclear weapons poses a significant threat to the peace and security on a world scale. The nuclear and ballistic missile programmes of the DPRK constitute a serious concern in this regard. We note the recent announcement by the DPRK. We reiterate the need for a peaceful, political and diplomatic solution to this problem, matched by concrete steps by the DPRK for complete, verifiable and irreversible denuclearization. We call on the DPRK to fully comply with its international obligations.

The full implementation of the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action (JCPOA) by all parties is needed as a contribution to the regional peace and security and a way to assure the international community in the exclusively peaceful nature of Iran's nuclear programme. We appeal to Iran to refrain from ballistic missile launches, inconsistent with the UNSCR 2231.

Bulgaria shares the concern over the non-compliance by Syria with its Safeguards agreement and calls on it to take immediate steps for adherence to the Additional Protocol. We strongly condemn the use of chemical weapons in Syria. This is a grave violation of the International law and of Syria's non-proliferation obligations regarding the weapons of mass destruction.

The role of the IAEA's comprehensive safeguards system is key in addressing the proliferation risks and the NPT implementation as a whole. The Agency should remain credible, professional and well-funded in order to be able to perform its duties. As an EU Member State, Bulgaria contributes substantively to this end.

Bulgaria has been working successfully for decades in all aspects of the peaceful use of atomic energy in accordance with the highest safety, security and non-proliferation standards. We support the crucial role of the IAEA in promoting nuclear safety and security standards. We take part in various initiatives aimed at developing international cooperation in different areas of nuclear energy applications.

Mr. Chair,

We have to join efforts in reaffirming the importance of the NPT as one of the key pillars of the international security. We expect that the constructive approach and the consensual spirit will prevail during this session of the Preparatory committee and pave the way for a positive outcome at the 2020 NPT Review Conference.