



S L O V A K I A

STATEMENT

by

**His Excellency
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**Permanent Representative of the Slovak Republic to the United Nations
Office and other international organisations in Geneva**

**at the Second Session of the Preparatory Committee
for the 2020 Review Conference of the Parties
to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons**

**General debate
Geneva, 24 April 2018**

Mr. Chairman,

I would like to congratulate you on the assumption of your role as the Chairman of this session of the Preparatory Committee. My delegation wishes you all the success in fulfilling your duties and I would like to assure you of Slovakia's support.

Slovakia aligns itself with the statement delivered on behalf of the European Union. Still, I would like to stress the following issues in my national capacity.

Mr. Chairman,

50 years ago, the NPT was opened for signature. This anniversary provide us with good opportunity to strengthen the NPT and its regime.

We need to reaffirm the centrality and integrity of the NPT as the cornerstone of the global nuclear non-proliferation regime, the essential foundation for the pursuit of nuclear disarmament as well as for further development of applications of nuclear energy for peaceful purposes. NPT is crucial for maintaining and strengthening global peace and security.

Slovakia considers all three NPT pillars equally important, mutually enabling and reinforcing and these should be implemented in a balanced way. All NPT State Parties must implement their obligations and commitments assumed under the Treaty or undertaken during its Review Conferences. We also need to promote universalization of the NPT.

Slovakia is committed to work on achievement of a world without nuclear weapons. We believe this can be best achieved by “progressive approach”. It takes into account the prevailing international security environment on prospects for progress and takes pragmatic and effective steps, which move us closer to achieving and maintaining this goal, in a safe and secure manner. We should focus, following this approach, on the implementation of the consensus 2010 NPT Action Plan and the 13 practical steps to disarmament agreed at 2000 NPT Review conference.

For the treaty-based nuclear disarmament and arms control, the revitalization of the Conference on Disarmament, the sole multilateral negotiating forum on disarmament, is of key importance and matter of urgency. It is necessary to overcome the longstanding deadlock of the Conference and revive its potential to deliver on pressing issues of the disarmament and non-proliferation and to address current security needs of international community. In this respect, we welcome the establishment of the five subsidiary bodies in the CD this year, which we believe, might help us to take the Conference back to substantive work.

Slovakia continues to support immediate commencement of negotiations on a treaty banning the production of fissile material for nuclear weapons and other nuclear explosive devices (FMCT). We support the work of the High Level Expert Preparatory Group, under the leadership of Canada, which we believe, will contribute to making progress in this regard. In the meantime, confidence-building measures can be taken immediately, without the need to wait for the commencement of formal negotiations. In this matter, we call upon all States possessing nuclear weapons that have not yet done so to declare and uphold an immediate moratorium on their production of fissile material for nuclear weapons or other nuclear explosive devices.

Entry into force of the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty (CTBT) is a crucial step for advancing disarmament and non-proliferation. We call on all States that have not ratified the CTBT, especially the remaining Annex II countries, to do so without further delay. Slovakia has actively been contributing to the building of the CTBTO capacities, including its verification regime since 2001, through active cooperation with the CTBT's Provisional Technical Secretariat, mainly by hosting various On-Site Inspection training and testing activities on our territory. We stand ready to continue to do so and to deepen existing cooperation.

Robust and credible verification regime is necessary to establish the needed confidence for sustainable progress in nuclear disarmament and for maintenance of a world without nuclear weapons. Slovakia also supports further development of the multilateral nuclear verification capabilities. In this regard, we welcome the establishment of the Group of Governmental Experts on nuclear disarmament verification and look forward to outcome of its work.

Mr. Chairman,

The proliferation of nuclear weapons continues to be the challenge for the international community and a threat to international peace and security.

Since the last year's Preparatory Committee, the Democratic People's Republic of Korea has continued to carry out nuclear and ballistic missile tests. Slovakia strongly condemns these acts. They represent a grave threat to international security and are flagrant violations of multiple UN Security Council resolutions. At the same time, we welcome the recent encouraging development and de-escalation of tension on the Korean peninsula and await the outcomes of the summit meetings. Nevertheless, the international community must keep up maximum pressure on the DPRK until it embarks on a credible path towards complete, verifiable and irreversible denuclearisation. We call upon North Korea to abandon its nuclear weapon and ballistic missile programs, comply with all its international obligations, including UN Security Council Resolutions and engage in constructive dialogue.

Slovakia supports the continued implementation of the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action (JCPOA), endorsed by UN Security Council Resolution 2231, and welcomes progress achieved so far. We underline the need to continue ensuring full and effective implementation throughout the entire lifetime of the deal. We also call on Iran to ratify the Additional Protocol to its Comprehensive Safeguards Agreement with the IAEA at an early date.

Slovakia fully supports the establishment of a zone free of weapons of mass

destruction and their delivery systems in the Middle East. We regret that it has not been possible so far to convene a Conference on the establishment of such a zone as outlined by the 2010 NPT Review Conference Action Plan. We call on all stakeholders in the region to proactively engage with the aim to convene a meaningful conference as soon as possible on the basis of arrangements freely arrived at between all States of the region.

International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) safeguards system has the pivotal role in the implementation of the NPT non-proliferation obligations. Slovakia provides full and continuous support to the IAEA in order to ensure that the Agency is able to meet its safeguards responsibilities. We stress the obligation of states to cooperate with the IAEA in order to facilitate the implementation of safeguards agreements. We are of the view that the full-scope safeguards complemented by Additional Protocols represent the current IAEA verification standard. We support their universalisation and call on all State Parties that have not yet done so to sign and ratify both the Comprehensive Safeguards Agreements as well as the Additional Protocol.

Mr. Chairman,

Peaceful use of nuclear energy remains a key priority and is of a strategic importance for Slovakia. Nuclear energy continues to have a stable position in the Slovak energy mix and constitutes one of the main pillars of our national energy policy. Currently, two new additional units at the Mochovce site are being constructed and a new nuclear source is planned at the Jaslovské Bohunice site. With the finalisation of these additional units, Slovak nuclear power program should provide for sufficient energy generating capacity for the country in the years to come.

Despite the projections for global installed nuclear power capacity being lowered, we welcome its steady continuous growth, particularly in developing countries with increasing electricity demands. Nuclear power remains an important option for my country when improving our energy supply security and addressing energy needs at affordable and stable generating costs while taking into account environmental protection.

Slovakia is of view that nuclear power, with its low carbon benefits, large capacity and dispatchable outputs, contributes significantly to meeting the Paris Agreement goal of limiting global temperature rise below 2°C, mitigating climate change and plays an important role in reaching the Sustainable Development Goals. In this regard, Slovakia commends the Agency's leading role in promoting peaceful uses of nuclear technology and wishes to reiterate its full support to the IAEA efforts in this field.

Nuclear safety is one of the key preconditions for the use of nuclear energy. Slovakia supports the Agency's efforts aimed at globalizing nuclear safety by networking, integrating safety-related activities, assisting the Member States in the implementation of the IAEA Safety Standards, and promoting adherence to the relevant international conventions (in particular the Convention on Nuclear Safety and the Joint Convention on the Management of Spent Fuel and Radioactive Waste).

While recognising that nuclear security remains the responsibility of each State, IAEA plays a central role in strengthening the nuclear security framework globally and in coordinating international cooperation in nuclear security. The entry into force of the Amendment to the Convention on Physical Protection of Nuclear Material was an essential step in the right direction. Slovakia also supports international efforts that mitigate nuclear risks and help prevent terrorists and other non-state actors from acquiring, trafficking or use of nuclear or other radioactive materials, such as UN Security Council resolutions 1540 and 2325 or the Global Initiative to Combat Nuclear Terrorism (GICNT) or Proliferation Security Initiative (PSI).

My delegation fully supports the IAEA Technical Cooperation Program and the role that the Agency in further development of the peaceful applications of nuclear technology. Particularly, in the field of sharing and providing scientific and technical assistance, expertise and know-how. I would like to emphasize the importance and the benefits of technical cooperation for all interested IAEA Member States, provision of which should be guided by the Agency's Statute and relevant IAEA Policy Making Organ's decisions.

I would also like to express Slovakia's support for activities of the Group of Friends for Women in Nuclear; the initiative announced at the June 2017 IAEA Board of Governors. My country, as its member, stands ready to support the Group's work in achieving the goals of strengthening the position and increasing the number of women in the field of nuclear energy – simply „women in nuclear“. All future women in nuclear count on our support.

Mr. Chairman,

In conclusion, allow me to express hope that the second Preparatory Committee will enable us to open avenues for strengthening the NPT regime. Slovakia stands ready to cooperate with other delegations in achieving this objective.

Thank you for your attention.