

2018 Preparatory Committee for the 2020 Review Conference of the Treaty on Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons, Geneva, 23 April – 4 May 2017

General Statement by the United Kingdom

The United Kingdom aligns itself with the statement made on behalf of the European Union. I would now like to make some remarks in my national capacity.

In July this year, it will be fifty years since the Nuclear Non Proliferation Treaty opened for signature. Thanks to the NPT, the number of nuclear armed states has remained in single figures. This is an historic achievement. We continue to curb proliferation, and have a comprehensive set of safeguards: 148 countries have now signed an Additional Protocol and 132 have brought it into force.

The contribution that peaceful uses of nuclear technology makes to our development also serves to highlight the benefits we derive from the NPT.

The NPT is more than just an arms control agreement: it is emblematic of the arms control and non-proliferation architecture.

It is deeply concerning that some choose to challenge the collective body of rules, norms and standards that we painstakingly constructed together. This behaviour undermines the security and prosperity of us all.

In the past year, we have seen North Korea violate a series of United Nations Security Council resolutions. In September, it tested its largest nuclear explosive device yet and in November, its longest range ballistic missile.

We hope that the prospective talks between Kim Jong Un and Presidents Moon and Trump demonstrate that the North Korean regime understands that only a change of course can bring the security and prosperity that it claims to seek.

Russia's development of new missile systems has raised serious questions about its compliance with the INF Treaty. We urge Russia to engage in constructive dialogue using mechanisms provided by the Treaty to address the international community's concerns.

Most recently and shockingly, we have seen the actual use of chemical weapons in Douma by the Assad regime and in Salisbury by Russia. These violations of treaty obligations and breaches of the norm against the use of WMD clearly have implications for both non-proliferation and disarmament.

We heard yesterday that these were not appropriate issues to bring to the NPT. They are, for two reasons. This behaviour speaks to the underlying question of the

credibility of the non-proliferation architecture of which the NPT, as so many have commented, is the cornerstone. Secondly, it is deeply relevant to issues that we will discuss later this week, notably a WMD Free Zone in the Middle East.

Some States uphold the international arms control framework and States some undermine it. If our common rules are to be effective, we must all meet our responsibilities to protect and implement those rules. And we need to hold to account those who breach them.

The United Kingdom is a responsible nuclear weapons state. We remain committed to strengthening each of the NPT's pillars. These are mutually reinforcing goals, and should be pursued together.

The consensus action plan for the 2010 Review Conference was unprecedented and a result of the strengthened review process adopted in 1995. We support full implementation of all its recommendations and call on all State Parties to continue working towards that end.

It is clear what we can achieve when we work together, in consensus, building trust and confidence between States.

In this context we were pleased to be able to take part in this morning's meeting of the P5. This format covers all NPT issues, including strategic stability, and will continue to do so.

The United Kingdom remains committed to Article Six.

We have a strong track record on arms reductions: we possess approximately one percent of the global total. We have reduced the number of warheads on each of our deployed ballistic submarines from forty-eight to forty, the number of operational missiles on each of those submarines to no more than eight and our total number of operationally available warheads to no more than 120.

We firmly believe the best way to achieve multilateral disarmament, is a negotiated step-by-step approach, within existing frameworks. Progress is possible, and the ongoing collective effort on disarmament verification is proof of this. We will say more about our current efforts in both the Quad verification partnership and the International Partnership on Nuclear Disarmament Verification when we make our Pillar I statement and at side-events this week.

The United Kingdom will continue to work for the universalisation of the NPT; to press for the entry into force of the Comprehensive Nuclear Test Ban Treaty; and to call for the early start of negotiations in the Conference on Disarmament on a Fissile Material Cut-Off Treaty.

The NPT enables strong action to prevent proliferation, as demonstrated by the negotiation of the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action. Since Implementation Day on 16 January 2016, the UK has worked with our partners in the Joint Commission to ensure the plan's success and we expect all parties to continue to implement the deal in full.

We also call on Iran to refrain from ballistic missile launches that are inconsistent with UN Security Council Resolution 2231 and from destabilising regional activities, including the proliferation of missile technology.

We reaffirm our commitment to the 1995 Resolution on the Middle East, and to the establishment of a zone in the Middle East free of nuclear and all other weapons of mass destruction and their delivery systems. We remain prepared to actively support and facilitate renewed regional dialogue aimed at bridging the differing views in the region on arrangements for a conference.

The NPT upholds the right to develop nuclear energy for peaceful uses. Global demand for reliable and sustainable energy is increasing. Nuclear technology can play an increasing role in securing better quality and duration of life for so many more people.

Several speakers before me have made reference to the Treaty prohibiting Nuclear weapons. We wish to be clear that the UK has not and will not become a party to the treaty and does not recognise its prohibitions as representing an emerging rule of customary international law.

In conclusion, there is no doubt that today's unpredictable security climate continues to test our resolve and our values. The NPT remains the cornerstone of our international security. It is vital to keep hold of the far sightedness that it embodies.

Together, we must continue to take steps towards our long term goal of a world without nuclear weapons.

Together, we must continue working to prevent proliferation.

Together, we must uphold the right of all Parties to research, develop, and utilise civil nuclear energy for their own benefit

All of this depends on us coming together to reaffirm our support for our common norms and standards, and to hold to account those who breach our rules and so threaten our security and prosperity.

Thank you