

Statement by Norway in Cluster I Debate at the 2018 Preparatory Committee for the 2020 Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty Review Conference. April 2018

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Mr. Chair,

The overall objective of the NPT is to achieve a world without nuclear weapons under effective international control. This objective has been reaffirmed and further elaborated in the outcome documents of various NPT review conferences. It is clearly reflected in the unequivocal undertaking of the nuclear weapons states to accomplish the total elimination of their nuclear arsenals.

At the same time, the NPT recognises that nuclear disarmament must not diminish security for all. Furthermore, all states have a responsibility to contribute to the zero goal.

It follows that nuclear disarmament cannot be seen in isolation from the broader international security landscape. In the light of current tensions, making any substantial progress on the implementation of Article VI of the NPT will be a formidable challenge. Yet, there can be no doubt that we have a responsibility to continue to strive for further nuclear disarmament. While the nuclear weapons states bear the prime responsibility, all other states must also do their part in laying the foundation for further cuts in nuclear arsenals.

To this end, we need to renew our global partnership on nuclear disarmament and non-proliferation. We cannot achieve full elimination of nuclear weapons unless all possessor states are part of the disarmament process. Among the states parties to the NPT, there are divergent views on the Treaty on Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons. Norway did not take part in the negotiations of this treaty and reiterated its views on this instrument in the UN General Assembly last autumn. At the same time, we noted that the Treaty was adopted by a majority last year.

Mr. Chair,

Irrespective of the positions we hold on the Treaty on Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons, we need to work constructively together in order to move closer to the NPT's overall objective. This is a complex and time consuming process. Our first aim must be to prevent the use of nuclear weapons, whether at regional or global level.

In this respect, the early negotiation and conclusion of an effectively verifiable Fissile Material Cut-off Treaty (FMCT) would be a significant step forward. Indeed, such a treaty seems to be more relevant today than ever before. This would demonstrate the reduced salience of nuclear weapons in future security policies. An FMCT that provides for gradual inclusion of stocks in excess of military requirements would clearly be a substantial contribution to nuclear disarmament.

Consolidation of the non-test norm is essential. This norm has been seriously undermined by the DPRK. Ever since 1996, Norway has been consistent in advocating an early entry into force of the Comprehensive Test Ban Treaty (CTBT). While existing moratoriums are highly valuable, they are still not legally binding. We urge all remaining Annex II states to meet the international community's requirements in this respect.

Promoting trust and confidence is essential in order to foster a global environment that is more conducive to nuclear disarmament. At a time of increasing tensions, we must explore all avenues to uphold existing arms control agreements. We need to ensure compliance with existing treaties as well as laying the necessary groundwork for new reductions in the future. We welcome the strategic dialogue between the US and the Russian Federation. In particular, they are strongly encouraged to maintain and extend the New START, to resolve outstanding compliance matters related to INF, and to initiate strategic talks that could lead to deeper cuts in all categories of nuclear weapons.

Nuclear disarmament verification increases confidence among the nuclear weapons states themselves. It is also essential that non-nuclear weapons states are confident that nuclear weapons states live up to their disarmament commitments. Systematic multilateral work on NDV demonstrates that we are serious about Article VI. Norway took a lead in the process that led to the adoption of UN General Assembly resolution 71/67 on nuclear disarmament verification. We are pleased that the Governmental Group of Experts will commence its work in a few weeks. In the margins of this second meeting of the Preparatory Committee there are a number of side-events on Nuclear Disarmament Verification, which I encourage you to attend.

The fact-based approach to the humanitarian consequences of nuclear detonations should inspire us to do more to reduce the risks associated with nuclear weapons. Norway supported the resolution on decreasing the operational readiness of nuclear weapons systems in the UN General Assembly. Norway has also provided voluntary funds to a UNIDIR study on this topic.

Negative security assurances (NSA) represent another area where we believe it is possible to make genuine progress. Such assurances were part of the package that led to the indefinite extension of NPT in 1995. The legitimate interest of non-nuclear weapons states in achieving legally binding negative security assurances has also been recognised in NPT outcome documents. A key avenue to pursue in this respect is the establishment of regional nuclear weapons free zones that are freely agreed on by the countries concerned.

A credible and robust non-proliferation regime is a prerequisite for a world without nuclear weapons. Firstly, we must resolve the current threat to the regime posed by the irresponsible actions of the DPRK. Secondly, we need to preserve the JCPOA. This means we must find ways to address other legitimate concerns regarding Iran's missile programme and its regional activities.

A fundamental precondition for a credible non-proliferation regime is the full universalisation of the comprehensive safeguards agreements and the Additional Protocol. If we are to achieve a world without nuclear weapons, the IAEA must be equipped with the necessary mandate and tools to inspect all nuclear activities in any given country in order to ascertain that these activities are for peaceful purposes only.

Mr. Chair,

Finally, while the states parties to the NPT may agree on a number of steps forward, it is important that these are pursued through the established intergovernmental mechanisms set up by SSOD I. Both the United Nations Disarmament Commission and the Conference on Disarmament have been struggling at times have been paralysed for decades. However, there are now some hopeful signs in both these bodies. We sincerely hope that we now can enter a stage where we make full use of these mechanisms to advance our disarmament agenda.