

CHECK AGAINST DELIVERY!

Statement

by Ambassador Michael Biontino,

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on Disarmament Geneva**

on Cluster I:

Nuclear Disarmament and Security Assurances

**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**

Geneva, 26 April 2018

Mr. President,

First of all, I align myself with the statement by the European Union.

As outlined in our General Statement, the German government's goal is to strengthen the Non-Proliferation Treaty as the foundation of the international nuclear non-proliferation and disarmament regime by maintaining a balance between its three pillars – nuclear disarmament, a strengthened non-proliferation regime and the peaceful use of nuclear energy. All of these three, mutually reinforcing pillars contribute to international peace and security.

While the NPT community has achieved a lot to prevent the spread of nuclear weapons, there is a longing to embark on a “fast track” towards a world without nuclear weapons.

Germany, too, would like to see a world without nuclear weapons in peace and security sooner rather than later.

However, as responsible states parties to the NPT, we must face today's reality which is characterized by a resurgence of nuclear threats and worrying rhetoric while countries such as DPRK are striving for a nuclear deterrence capability. We

maintain our ambition for nuclear disarmament; yet, our most urgent aim is to preserve the existing nuclear arms control architecture, which has in fact eliminated entire categories of nuclear weapons and verifiably reduced the number of strategic warheads and their delivery systems between the US and Russia. At present, we need to preserve the INF treaty and ensure an extension or succession of New START.

As we pursue concrete nuclear disarmament measures in accordance with Art. VI of the NPT, Germany is convinced that only a progressive step-by-step approach based on the 2010 Action Plan can provide a realistic and valid roadmap. We acknowledge the central responsibility of Nuclear-Weapon States in agreeing on reductions, and aim at improving the conditions for concrete, verifiable and irreversible nuclear disarmament. Moreover, our approach seeks to address the underlying lack of trust, which is a major impediment, by developing fresh avenues and instruments.

- 1) A world free of nuclear weapons is not per se a world of perpetual peace. Strong incentives to break ranks will persist. In order to achieve and sustain a nuclear-

weapons free world, we will need a robust and credible verification regime. We are actively engaged in the International Partnership for Nuclear Disarmament Initiative (IPNDV), which seeks to identify verification procedures and instruments amongst Nuclear Weapon States and non-Nuclear Weapon States.

2) Another tangible step towards “global zero” could be a treaty prohibiting the production of fissile material for weapons’ purposes, an FMCT. This, at least, would prevent the further enlarging of huge stockpiles of fissile material that can ultimately be transformed into nuclear warheads. We remain committed to negotiating an FMCT and will do our utmost to help overcome diverging views.

3) We continue to support the prompt entry into force of the Comprehensive Test-Ban Treaty (CTBT). We call on all States that have not yet done so, in particular the remaining Annex II States, to sign and ratify the Treaty. We value the critical role of the verification regime in detecting the DPRK’s nuclear tests, and welcome that the International Monitoring System is nearing completion. Pending entry into force, we call on all

States to uphold their moratoria on nuclear weapon test explosions or any other nuclear explosion, and those States that have not instituted such moratoria to do so.

4) With good reason, the 2010-Action Plan laid emphasis on transparency, making reporting an obligation incumbent on all NPT Member States. Evidently, the P5 have a particular responsibility to report, without prejudice to national security, on their stockpiles. Without concrete numbers, it is almost impossible to determine progress or to confirm that nuclear stockpiles are not expanding. This Conference should thus reiterate the crucial importance of transparency, for instance by revisiting the Standard Reporting Forms developed by the NPDI.

5) The currency of disarmament is trust. So-called “Negative Security Assurances” have been instrumental in building confidence and diminishing the role and prominence of nuclear weapons in national doctrines. It is timely to take a fresh look at these assurances and discuss whether they should be reaffirmed in order to boost the credibility and legitimacy of the non-proliferation regime. In the present difficult context, it is

also of paramount importance to honor and preserve commitments under existing treaties.

In closing, let me say a word on how we can make progress on nuclear disarmament in this Review Cycle regardless of our differences on the need and usefulness of an immediate nuclear weapons prohibition. I hope that we are united by the goal of making this Review Cycle a successful one for nuclear disarmament based on the 2010 Action Plan.

Needless to say that Germany is open to discuss ideas how to supplement or update it, if necessary.