

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

**April 23 – May 4, 2018, Geneva**

**Statement by Bulgaria  
Cluster 1 issues, 25 April 2018**

Mr. Chairman,

Bulgaria fully associates itself with the statement made by the EU. I would like to touch upon some issues of particular importance to us.

Bulgaria reiterates its commitment to the objective of achieving a world free of nuclear weapons. This is our shared goal and we all have to act in a sustainable, realistic and responsible manner, aimed at bridging our differences and realizing progress towards its implementation.

We are convinced that 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. The legal framework to pursue this objective is provided by the NPT and its Article VI. This treaty-level commitment to eliminate nuclear weapons has a proven record of significant achievements. The NPT is the only credible instrument for nuclear disarmament and we have to focus our efforts to further consolidate its regime.

This process should take into account the complex security environment and the strategic context while having in mind also the concerns about the risks posed by nuclear weapons. Seeking a common ground and embarking on realistic measures that enhance the credibility of the existing regime is indispensable to advance on nuclear disarmament. Progress towards a world without nuclear weapons could be achieved only through a gradual and inclusive approach with the active participation of nuclear weapons' states, and due consideration of the security interests of all states.

The 2010 NPT Review Conference Action Plan gives an agreed roadmap with building blocks essential to achieve a world free of nuclear weapons. The CTBT is of key importance for furthering the nuclear disarmament and non-proliferation regime. We call upon all States, in particular those bearing responsibility under Annex II, to sign and ratify the CTBT as a matter of priority. The growing security tension and the repeated actions by the DPRK in defiance of all relevant UN

Security Council resolutions stress the urgent need to have the CTBT into full legal standing. We note the recent announcement by the DPRK to suspend nuclear testing as encouraging but we underline the need for concrete steps that should lead to the country's complete, verifiable and irreversible denuclearization.

The commencement of negotiations on a Fissile Material Cut-off Treaty (FMCT) in the Conference on Disarmament is another significant element of the progressive approach and a priority for us. This would further the implementation of the NPT and its Article VI and reinforce non-proliferation norms and obligations. We expect the recommendations of the High-Level FMCT Expert Preparatory Group to advance the important work done so far and bring the process closer to the start of negotiations.

The challenges that mark the current security environment make even more pressing the need to invest serious efforts in building trust and confidence. A credible verification is indispensable for advancement of nuclear disarmament and establishing confidence. In this regard, we welcome the forthcoming discussions at 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), that contribute to this end.

While welcoming the progress so far in implementation of Article VI, we strongly encourage further reduction of strategic and non-strategic nuclear weapons stockpiles in unilateral, bilateral or plurilateral context, as another practical step towards global nuclear disarmament.

In concluding, I would like to stress once again the continuous commitment of Bulgaria towards the achievement of a world without nuclear weapons in a progressive and pragmatic manner that will foster the strategic stability and will create conditions for further progress.