



**STATEMENT BY SOUTH AFRICA ON THE DRAFT CHAIR'S SUMMARY AT THE
NPT SECOND PREPCOM**

4 May 2018

[check against delivery]

Thank you Mr Chairperson,

At the outset, let me join others in expressing my delegation's appreciation for steering this session of the PrepCom to its conclusion.

South Africa associates itself with the statements delivered by New Zealand on behalf of the New Agenda Coalition and the NAM by Venezuela.

Chairperson, we have come to the end of an intense PrepCom where we reaffirmed our commitment to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons as the cornerstone of the nuclear disarmament and nuclear non-proliferation regime. As we look forward to the Third NPT PrepCom it is important that I underline the following critical points:

- We welcome and support the Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons as a positive step towards the total elimination of nuclear weapons and a major contribution to the implementation of Article VI of the NPT thereby strengthening its credibility. We are confident this Treaty will enter into force;
- This PrepCom took place against the backdrop of deep concerns expressed by the overwhelming majority of States about the threat of nuclear war, by design or accident due to the escalation of great power rivalry, which in

essence has plunged the world into another cold war, a renewed cold war but this time around without the restraints that the nuclear weapon States had on each other in the past. We wish to reiterate that the total elimination of nuclear weapons is the only guarantee that they will never be used again;

- As with the majority of Member States we are concerned about the continuing modernisation of nuclear arsenals and their means of delivery as well as the salience of nuclear weapons in the military doctrines of some nuclear weapon States. This is a flagrant violation of the letter and spirit of the NPT and in particular, Article VI;

While my delegation notes the reflection of views expressed by various delegations on your Factual Summary, we wish to highlight the following concerns.

Chairperson,

My delegation is concerned that some views in this summary have been referred to as “welcomed”, creating the impression that they were widely supported, whereas in reality, nothing can be further from the truth. Other important issues which were indeed widely supported did not receive a similar attention. A key example of this inconsistency can be seen in the reflection on the Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons, amongst others.

Although the Chair’s Factual Summary has no formal status, there is a sense in which it sets us up for how we arrive at the final destination, which is the Review Conference. We will either arrive there, more polarised than we were or we will arrive with some understanding of each other.

This Second NPT PrepCom follows immediately after the adoption of the Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons which was widely welcomed by an overwhelmingly majority of Member States and Groups. Nevertheless, it is a disappointment to my delegation that this Treaty, which represents one of the most important developments in the area of nuclear weapons since 1945 and that fills a key remaining legal gap in international law regarding weapons of mass destruction,

is subjectively captured as being “noted”. This does not factually depict the overwhelming support expressed towards this Treaty and emphasis placed on it by such a large number of States. On the other hand the very next paragraph 41 clearly reflects the opposition to the Treaty and is thus very imbalanced and partial.

Chairperson,

During this PrepCom we heard statements by a few States highlighting the international security environment as deteriorating. In this regard, it was thus argued by these very few States that there is a need for the creation of conducive conditions for nuclear disarmament, the so called CCND. Yet this view expressed by a handful of States seems to have created the leading narrative that is being expressed through the Chairs summary that the NPT States have to work on improving the geopolitical environment and create the conditions for further nuclear disarmament. I must reemphasise that Article VI of the NPT contains no such conditions for nuclear disarmament. This distortive undermining of the integrity, letter and spirit of the NPT by the nuclear weapon States is deeply troubling to us and should have been equally of concern to the Chair, enough not to reflect it as a majority view.

We join many other States that have stated categorically that there is no better time for nuclear weapon States to implement their commitments and obligations unconditionally, especially those related to nuclear disarmament, than the present. In this regard, Chairperson, it would have been more accurate to start with the end of paragraph 8 that reflects the majority view that “commitments made under the Treaty are not subject to conditions and should be implemented without delay”, instead of commencing the paragraph with the contrary view, namely “... the responsibility ... to create the conditions conducive to further nuclear disarmament”.

Chairperson,

States Parties during this PrepCom were loud and clear that there is a real danger associated with the growing role of nuclear weapons in military and strategic doctrines. This was further reasserted by the concern about the modernisation programmes of nuclear weapon States. It is concerning that the chair has used

wording such as “perceived”, “potentially” and nuclear weapons playing a “diminished” role in an effort to display that this danger is not based on reality and thus to justify the continued possession of nuclear weapons by nuclear weapon States.

Chairperson,

On the issue of nuclear security, South Africa would like to reiterate that nuclear security must be located in the broader framework of nuclear disarmament, nuclear non-proliferation and the peaceful uses of nuclear energy. We wish to highlight that efforts to strengthen nuclear security must not hamper international cooperation in the field of peaceful nuclear activities – a position shared by all NAM States Parties.

Chairperson,

With reference to the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action (JCPoA) with Iran, my delegation fully shares the views expressed regarding the importance of full adherence by all parties to the JCPoA. South Africa welcomes the progress made towards the implementation of the JCPoA and calls on all the parties involved to continue fulfilling their obligations under the agreement.

Chairperson,

My delegation reiterates its commitment to the NPT as the cornerstone of the nuclear non-proliferation and disarmament regime and stands ready to work with other State Parties to make the 2020 NPT review cycle a success.

I thank you Chairperson.