

23 April-4 May 2018, Geneva

Cluster I (*Disarmament*)

Thank you, Mr. Chairman,

With the ever changing international security environment, divergent views on specific issues of nuclear disarmament have become more prominent than ever. Nevertheless, all of us here would agree the NPT has played a central role in maintaining global stability and our common security for nearly fifty years since its entry into force. It is indeed hard to suggest even in hindsight any alternative regime that could held at bay proliferation of nuclear weapons while guaranteeing peaceful uses of nuclear energy.

It firmly remains a cornerstone of the nuclear non-proliferation and a foundation of the pursuit of nuclear disarmament. In our joint endeavor toward a world free of nuclear weapons, our legitimate question therefore is not whether the mechanism is still relevant but how we can strengthen and better implement it.

All three pillars of the NPT need to be implemented effectively to enhance the credibility and integrity of the mechanism as a whole. As the implementation of each pillar is mutually reinforcing, nuclear-weapon states must do more about the relatively slow progress in nuclear disarmament. They must continue to carry out their commitment undertaken in Article VI of the Treaty, in particular, by reducing their nuclear arsenals and enhancing transparency and confidence-building measures.

As the saying goes, Rome was not built in a day. We must remember it was not only vehement political will but also cool-headed security analysis that enabled

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the reduction of the number of nuclear weapons in existence to a third of what it was at its height. Our collective pursuit to a global zero requires a progressive and realistic approach. We must address existing and emerging nuclear challenges drawing on our accomplishments made within the NPT and also with the full engagement of nuclear-weapon states.

Let me emphasize that my delegation believes that all of us share a common understanding on the catastrophic humanitarian consequences of the use of nuclear weapons. Our future generations deserve a peaceful world without fear for a nuclear war. In this vein, it is critical that the 13 practical steps of the 2000 Review Conference Final Document as well as the 2010 Action Plan be put into practice in a realistic and progressive manner.

The recent decision of the Conference on Disarmament to resume its substantive discussion in subsidiary bodies provides us with a valuable chance in this regard. It is our sincere hope that the discussion will help reach an understanding on the areas of commonalities, deepen technical discussions and broaden areas of agreement on core issues the CD deals with.

We also look forward to the contribution that the Group of Governmental Experts on nuclear disarmament verification will make. Verification of nuclear warheads dismantlement is an uncharted area in spite of its indispensability for a verifiable nuclear disarmament. In this context, my delegation welcomes the substantive progress made by the International Partnership for Nuclear Disarmament Verification (IPNDV) with the participation of both non-nuclear and nuclear-weapon states.

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On the other hand, however, negotiation of the Fissile Material Cut-off Treaty and the entry into force of the Comprehensive Nuclear Test Ban Treaty (CTBT) are long overdue in spite of an overwhelming support from the international community. Considering many benefits that they could provide not only for nuclear disarmament but also for non-proliferation, we have to step up our efforts to bring them into fruition as soon as possible.

Mr. Chair,

Surprisingly enough, in light of heightened tension just a few months ago on the Korean Peninsula, the window of opportunity to resolve peacefully the North Korean nuclear issue was opened by the inter-Korean dialogue on the occasion of the Pyeong-chang Olympic Winter Games. The inter-Korean summit, which will take place tomorrow, has the denuclearization issue high on the agenda. The US-DPRK summit is also expected to be held soon.

We must seize this hard-won momentum to denuclearize North Korea and bring lasting peace to the Korean Peninsula and beyond. The successful resolution of the North Korean nuclear issue will contribute to strengthening the NPT regime. The Republic of Korea will do its utmost to bring North Korea back to the NPT obligations and IAEA safeguards and ultimately achieve its complete, verifiable and irreversible denuclearization. In this process, we will continue to closely cooperate with the international community and also count on its full support.

Either denuclearization on the Korean Peninsula or disarmament at the global level is not a low hanging fruit. Nevertheless, pessimism will only be self-fulfilling. Only our perseverance and patience will enable us to take one step

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closer to the heartfelt vision of a world free of nuclear weapons. Thank you.

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