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**Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons: Third Preparatory
Committee Session of the 2020 Review Cycle**

Monday, 29 April 2019, 10:00 AM, Trusteeship Council Chamber

His Excellency Ambassador Syed Hasrin,

Distinguished delegates,

Excellencies, ladies and gentlemen

At the outset please accept, Ambassador Syed Hasrin, my congratulations on your election as Chair of this Preparatory Committee session. I have full confidence that you will capably steer States parties to success. I take this opportunity to reiterate that you have both my complete support and that of the Office for Disarmament Affairs.

We are on the verge of an historic occasion – 2020 will commemorate the fiftieth anniversary of the Treaty’s entry into force and the twenty-fifth anniversary of its indefinite extension. The 2020 Review Conference is, therefore, an ideal opportunity to not only celebrate the tremendous achievements of the NPT, but also to ensure it remains fit for purpose and able to meet the new challenges of our current and future contexts.

This session of the Preparatory Committee has an important responsibility in laying the ground for success in 2020. By accomplishing its procedural tasks, the Committee can make sure the Review Conference is able to start on the right foot and dive directly into matters of substance.

Those procedural tasks include not only adopting the draft agenda and rules of procedure for the Review Conference, but also the allocation of items to the Main Committees – the substance of the Review Conference – and the nomination of the Review Conference’s President designate.

States parties have witnessed what can happen when these procedural tasks are not accomplished. It leads to acrimony and diverts attention away from the much-needed focus on the matters at the heart of the Treaty.

The election of a President-designate is also important to facilitating success in 2020. Any President-designate should have as much time as possible to consult with all States parties and prepare, as best they can, to lead the Conference to success.

I know that all States parties share the view that accomplishing these tasks should be done as a priority and as expeditiously as possible.

Under the arrangements agreed in the context of the strengthened review process, the Third Session is also supposed to produce recommendations on substance to the Review Conference.

I strongly support the message that the Chair has delivered in consultations: States parties have the opportunity to deliver consensus recommendations to the Review Conference based on equality among the three pillars of the Treaty and drawn from areas of commonality and convergence.

And you should strive to do so.

The external environment weighs heavily on your proceedings and finding common ground might not be easy. You will not find points of convergence if you are rigid and inflexible in your positions. They must be sought through real dialogue and negotiation in good faith, guided by your common, strategic interest in the security benefits of the NPT.

Sadly, the kind of dialogue that promotes stability and confidence is an increasingly rare commodity.

Last week, on the occasion of the International Day of Multilateralism and Diplomacy for Peace, Member States discussed the multiple challenges currently facing the rules-based international order. Key among these is a trust deficit that undermines confidence, stifles progress and even threatens existing gains.

Nowhere is this more apparent than in efforts to achieve the collective goal of a world free of nuclear weapons. Recent developments in the international security environment have threatened the web of instruments, agreements and arrangements established during and after the Cold War. There is an increased emphasis on the value of nuclear weapons. Restraints on nuclear arsenals are weakening and, in some cases, collapsing. States are diverging even on previously agreed principles and objectives.

It is my sincere hope that States parties will not allow these trends to seep into these proceedings. Instead, I hope that you will use this opportunity to reaffirm your commitment to this treaty, to its complete and balanced implementation, and to the fulfilment of all the obligations you have assumed under it as States parties.

I hope that you will use the session of the Preparatory Committee to begin to rebuild the trust and confidence that forged so many of the landmark achievements of the last three decades.

I hope that you will begin the process of restoring the habits of cooperation that led to the creation of this Treaty and to its entrenchment not only as the cornerstone of the non-proliferation regime and the essential foundation for nuclear disarmament, but as a pillar of international security.

Doing so will require a spirit of compromise and flexibility, a strong degree of patience and, above all, a willingness to engage with each other on the substance of the Treaty without being distracted by issues that are not directly relevant to your deliberations.

Ensuring the strength and durability of the NPT must be your aim. Securing the collective benefits it provides to all States parties should be your goal.

I wish you all the best in your deliberations.

Thank you.