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Statement by

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Ambassador, Permanent Representative
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**at the Third Preparatory Committee for the 2020 NPT Review Conference of
the States Parties to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons**

**New York,
29 April 2019**

Mr Chairman,

At the outset, I would like to congratulate you on your election as the Chairman of the Third Preparatory Committee of the 2020 NPT Review Conference and express Latvia's full support and cooperation. Latvia fully aligns itself with the statement delivered on behalf of the European Union. I would like to make the following remarks in a national capacity.

Mr Chairman,

Latvia is strongly committed to full implementation of the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons and welcomes the progress made under its three mutually reinforcing pillars.

Even after almost 50 years NPT remains a cornerstone of the global non-proliferation and disarmament regime and a major achievement for the international security. Collective recognition of the value of the NPT and its legacy should be preserved, especially in the eve of the NPT Review Conference in 2020. Both nuclear and non-nuclear states have to be onboard in order to achieve tangible, long-term outcome in 2020.

NPT Action Plan 2010 has set a high standard and aim for global disarmament and non-proliferation. Divergences and mistrust should not lower our expectations. Here I would like to remind you of a simple truth that Michelangelo has laid upon us:

“The great danger for most of us lies not in setting our aim too high and falling short, but in setting our aim too low and achieving our mark.”

We have to hold our aims and expectations high because that is what brought us to the NPT. NPT is a testimony of what a combination of concentrated diplomatic efforts and impenetrable political will can accomplish. But the hardest part starts here. It is our responsibility to uphold and preserve the NPT as a key multilateral instrument, to promote its universalization and strengthen its implementation.

This delicate job is further complicated by the troublesome security environment, disregard of the international rules based order and attempts to limit the effectiveness of the multilateral diplomacy. Hence, re-establishment of a climate of trust and confidence among states and recapturing the sense of common purpose in disarmament fora is a prerequisite to move forward with commitments we have made decades ago. We owe it to our security and future generations.

At the current security juncture advancing mutual dialogue on creating environment for nuclear disarmament and strengthening non-proliferation is required more than ever. Latvia has been actively chairing the Nuclear Suppliers Group for the period of 2018-2019 as part of our contribution to these efforts.

Mr Chairman,

We have to continuously revisit our disarmament and non-proliferation commitments and act upon them. State Parties at the 2010 NPT Review Conference as well as in other multilateral formats have broadly reaffirmed their support to ban the production of fissile material for nuclear weapons. It is time to move forward and advance global nuclear disarmament by holding immediate and substantive negotiations in the Conference on Disarmament on the FMCT.

The CTBT is of crucial importance to Latvia, and its entry into force and universalization continues to be a priority. CTBT is an indispensable tool in our efforts to advance global nuclear disarmament and non-proliferation. We reiterate our call on all States that have not yet done so, in particular those listed in Annex 2, to sign and ratify the Treaty.

A comprehensive verification regime that would eventually enable a world without nuclear weapons remains to be designed. It is a central piece in successful disarmament architecture. The International Partnership for Nuclear Disarmament Verification (IPNDV) is one of the few examples that have made a substantial contribution to this end.

We are particularly pleased to see the work that International Atomic Energy Agency has done to ensure the implementation of the NPT's third pillar of peaceful uses of nuclear energy. The Agency ensures that peaceful nuclear programs will not contribute to nuclear proliferation, and nuclear technology can be used to address devastating challenges such as food security, human health and environmental protection, thus, contributing to Agenda 2030 and the Sustainable Development Goals.

Mr Chairman,

Every measure we have established and implemented is a building block for global security. Abusing or violating instruments meant for strengthening collective security to further one's policy goals is unacceptable. Hence, it is our duty to guard and preserve the international rules based order. Continued honoring of international norms and democratic institutions must remain our main path.

Likely disintegration of the INF Treaty will leave a temporary void in the disarmament architecture. However, we cannot support a situation where only one of the sides stands by its commitments. Russia has not addressed its non-compliance in a substantive and transparent way. To ensure that arms control serves its purpose, there can be no space for loopholes, selective compliance and lack of transparency.

Latvia also remains deeply concerned that core provisions of the Budapest memorandum on security assurances to Ukraine continue to be violated. Such actions significantly erode the level of trust and undermine nuclear disarmament and non-proliferation efforts.

Latvia strongly supports peaceful efforts aimed at achieving DPRK's complete, verifiable and irreversible denuclearization. Maintaining strict diplomatic and economic pressure combined with further engagement with North Korea on the implementation of its Singapore Summit commitments is crucial. Nothing short of lasting solution for regional and global peace should be accepted. DPRK's return to the compliance with the NPT and other international obligations is vital.

We welcome IAEA findings which confirm that Iran remains compliant with the JCPOA. However, Iran's ballistic missile program is undermining regional peace and security. Iran must fully comply with the UN Security Council resolution 2231.

Mr Chairman,

In the light of the upcoming NPT Review Conference next year it is our duty to uphold and strengthen aforementioned instruments and initiatives. This is the only way to a safer world with undiminished security for all.

Thank you!