



**Statement of Argentina to the Third Session of the Preparatory Committee
for the 2020 Review Conference of the Parties to the NPT – General Debate
New York, 29 April – 10 May 2019**

**Delivered by the Head of Delegation,
Ambassador Rafael Mariano Grossi**

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Allow me to begin by congratulating you, Amb. Hussyn, for your election to guide this final session of the Preparatory Committee of the 2020 review cycle. We appreciate the determination you have shown in assuming this commitment, effectively completing the important and necessary previous consultations with all interested States. They are an important element of the inclusive and transparent process that was started by your predecessors and will allow us to continue establishing the foundations to achieve a successful Review Conference. You can count on Argentina's unrestricted support.

We would also like to extend our appreciation to Amb. Bugajsky for his excellent work supported by Poland's diplomatic team for PREPCOM II, which allowed us to continue our debates in an environment of trust and dialogue, maintaining a good degree of clarity on the objectives we must meet in order to prepare for a successful Review Conference, in good faith. His summary document and his recommendations, together with the same from the First Session, will contribute no doubt to strengthen the current review process.

Special mention is due to Working Paper 4, presented jointly by the Chairs of PREPCOM I and PREPCOM II, which identifies wisely the indispensable points of agreement and offers a privileged assessment after their respective consultation processes, which were broad and inclusive. We appreciate the value of the conclusion that the NPT continues to be of central importance for its States parties, as it underpins our juridical and political efforts on non-proliferation, disarmament and peaceful uses of nuclear energy. A conclusion I share and I have been able to confirm myself.

As a given, we echo as well its conclusion that it is necessary to resolve expeditiously the nomination of the President of the Review Conference and other officials at the earliest possible time (item 12), and the recommendation emphasizing the relevance of the Presidents' election being resolved promptly in order to allow for the elections of other officials and, specifically, to allow for continuity and cooperation. I must add, consistency, in this last phase of the preparatory process.

The time to make the decision is this session of the Preparatory Committee. I was honored with the endorsement of the Latin American and Caribbean Countries Group over two years ago, and we have patiently waited for the other necessary steps, which certainly could have been resolved earlier.

To continue to delay a decision, at this point of the process, is neither logical nor reasonable. There is much to do, as well you know Mr. Chairman, and so we hope that your consultations can lead to a speedy solution of this issue. To continue to speak of the high importance we place in this Treaty, while refusing to confirm the candidate that has been endorsed by his region, would not be easy to understand. It is not a matter of affecting one candidate, or even his country, but it is the whole of the preparatory process that you Chair today that is affected.

The past experience, the statements made during the last session and the broad consultations by the previous review processes Presidents, all confirm to us that there is the widest consensus on the importance of designating the officials of the Conference as soon as it is possible. I would like to reiterate my appreciation for the many expressions of support by delegations and regions. We are ready to start our work.

Mr. Chairman,

The Treaty on the non-proliferation of nuclear weapons is the cornerstone of the disarmament and non-proliferation regimes globally, and the next Review Conference in 2020 marks the 50th anniversary of its entering into force. It offers a

chance to reaffirm the commitment of State parties with the balance of obligations and rights that even today, after 50 years, we consider valid.

The issues that are contemplated in the Treaty have evolved throughout these years, reflecting a juridical and political architecture that underpins the international law, indispensable for policy-setting both in nuclear-weapons and non-nuclear-weapons States. This architecture is rooted in a specific international context, which demands from us the ability to reconsider the best way to maintain its validity with one goal in sight: a robust regime, one which makes it impossible for countries to consider nuclear weapons as an option, and where the existing weapons are subjected to a sustained disarmament process that is verifiable, transparent and irreversible.

This international context presents itself with serious challenges, showing profiles that cannot but concern us, given the responsibility that we still have to prevent the escalation of conflicts through the use of nuclear weapons. But we must not forget that the NPT has been able to weather other storms along its history, since its adoption in 1968, and has endured through very difficult times in the international arena.

Once again, the international efforts to confine the use of weapons of mass destruction to the theoretical and speculative are faced with disheartening cases in the front pages of the newspapers. We can see that our achievements in terms of peace, security and stability worldwide cannot be taken for granted, but demand an ongoing commitment to sustain and strengthen the agreements that are the foundation of such progress. The NPT is an archetypal case in this regard.

The current international situation reinforces the priority and validity of the NPT. As the rest of the international community, Argentina has received the announcements regarding the interruption of the North-Korean program of nuclear testing and missiles with interest and anticipation. We trust that the dialogue initiated with South Korea and the United States continues towards the achievement of more ambitious and verifiable agreements. In particular, we consider that the signature and ratification of the CTBT by North Korea, as well as a prompt return of the IAEA inspectors to its territory, would constitute additional positive gestures towards the region and the international community as a whole.

We trust that the International Atomic Energy Agency will be able to confirm that Iran continues to fulfill its obligations, and we call on all interested parties to carry on in their efforts towards solutions mutually agreed in all the spheres of the disarmament and non-proliferation agenda.

In spite of the sometimes diverging views many of us can have regarding the pace of the implementation of several goals of the NPT, for example in terms of disarmament, after 25 years of the decision to extend it indefinitely, we must admit that without this Treaty the world would be doing considerably worse, with greater uncertainty and danger. We need only imagine a world without the NPT, which would mean the cessation of most of the activities regarding safeguards and peaceful uses of nuclear technology, and international nuclear security falling in disarray and unilateralism.

Mr. Chairman,

In our view, the 2020 Conference will be a *Review and Recommitment* Conference.

Both facets are important and mutually reinforcing.

The Review is, in itself, imperative. Especially after the 2015 exercise as a whole was frustrated by the lack of an agreed conclusion.

Many important developments have taken place in the past 10 years. We see international circumstances that are concerning, and also progress and new elements in the debate. We must focus our efforts so that the review does not fall hostage of sporadic issues, which should never lead us to lose sight of the richness of the whole and the importance of complying fully with the mandate of the Conference, including the review of the implementation of the whole of the NPT.

As to safety and security, after the Fukushima Daiichi accident, countries have undertaken a series of actions moving us towards a profound and substantive improvement in the field, and are decisively embarked in a paradigm shift regarding the safety and security culture. We can also see a renewed global interest in nuclear security and a number of concrete actions, including high level initiatives such as the Summits at Head of State level. Also, the IAEA Conferences, with a new edition coming only a few months in advance of the NPT Review Conference itself. These are international actions that would have seemed unimaginable only a few years back when thinking about these issues.

We can also speak of developments in the area of Safeguards, with the considerable modernization of its systems through integrated safeguards. New solutions at the juridical, technological and political level are being sought, in cooperation with IAEA Member States and through a continuous dialogue with all parties.

The peaceful uses of nuclear energy deserve a special mention. They have grown in impact, reaching new and important applications to medicine and health, agriculture and the fight against climate change. They have grown in technology, with concrete advancements such as the Small Modular Reactors, with the beginning of the licensing processes in other countries and some even under construction as is the case in my country, Argentina. It has also grown geographically, with newcomer countries in every region, new members signing onto the IAEA and its technical cooperation program, as well as developing and developed countries that keep advancing their programmes, including research reactors and even new nuclear power plants in locations that seemed unfathomable 15 years ago.

As designated President, I intend to call for a series of regional consultations, in order to hear out experiences, to understand everyone's views and to look for effective ways to promote tangible, concrete progress during the Review Conference.

This clearly merits a review exercise that is both systematic and earnest.

Along the issues in the agenda, my Delegation will go into further detail in its substantive considerations for each cluster.

Mr. Chairman,

In our view, the 2020 Review Conference will be also a conference to express our renewed commitment to the NPT as well.

This is significant, 50 years since the adoption of the Treaty and 25 after its in extension indefinitely.

There is no argument that the NPT has made a great contribution to international security. Even though there is still some way ahead, the very clauses of this historical agreement already show us the way.

Our societies are looking on. The international community as a whole has the right to demand a bigger thrust forward and political commitment.

This session is the chance to listen to each other attentively and to start considering how we can move forward in each of our individual goals, while converging in a direction that our counterparts can also take, a direction that goes beyond our starting positions and moves us closer, let's face it, to the greater good. Upon the conclusion of our debates, we'll be embarking in the last year of work until our final destination, here again in New York. This is not the time to relent or to look back, quite the opposite. 2020 will be here before we know it.

Many thanks.