



# IRELAND

General Debate

Statement by

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At the

2019 Preparatory Committee Meeting of the Parties  
to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear  
Weapons (NPT)

Chair,

Ireland aligns itself with the statements made by the European Union, by the New Agenda Coalition and by the Vienna Group of Ten.

Allow me to take this opportunity to congratulate you on your assumption of the Chair of this important Third Preparatory Committee Meeting and to wish you every success. I would also like to thank you and your predecessor, Ambassador Muhammad Shahrul Ikram Yaakob, for the extensive and inclusive manner in which you have undertaken your consultations in advance of this meeting.

Taken together with the significant contributions made by the previous PrepCom Chairs from the Netherlands and Poland we now have a solid foundation on which to build over the coming two weeks.

Chair,

The NPT has come to be regarded as one of the international community's success stories. It provides us with an almost universally accepted framework for the continued pursuit of nuclear disarmament and has acted as a bulwark against the proliferation of nuclear weapons, while facilitating the benefits of the peaceful applications of nuclear technologies.

From the outset, I wish to reiterate Ireland's full commitment to working with all States Parties to making progress across the three pillars of the NPT. We will elaborate further on specific proposals throughout the debates on each cluster.

We must be mindful however as we approach the 2020 Review Conference that the future relevance and effectiveness of the NPT is dependent on its ability to concretely deliver on its original bargain. As with all international agreements, the full and effective implementation of obligations and commitments made under the Treaty is fundamental to its credibility.

For too long the disarmament pillar of the NPT has been neglected. Our collective dereliction in ensuring the full implementation of Article VI serves only to undermine the Treaty's original bargain and put the NPT in a state of heightened jeopardy.

As such, it is imperative that all States parties reaffirm their commitment, not only to Article VI, but to all of the consensus based outcomes we have collectively reached throughout the history of this Treaty. The decisions and resolution adopted in 1995, the unequivocal undertaking of the nuclear-weapon States to accomplish the total elimination of their nuclear arsenals; the 13 practical steps, and the detailed 64-point Action Plan in 2010 all remain fully applicable. For Ireland, there can be absolutely no rollback on the commitments contained in the NPT or undertaken at previous Review Conferences. A reaffirmation of these commitments by all States should be the starting point, not the end goal of the 2020 Review Cycle.

Chair,

Some States have argued that the deteriorating international security environment means that progress on disarmament cannot be made; that we must wait until the time is right. But, as Ireland's Minister for Foreign Affairs said in his address to the Conference on Disarmament earlier this year, *"Multilateral disarmament is not a luxury. It is a necessity whose urgency grows as prospects for peace and security diminish."*

There is a clear majority of Non-Nuclear-Weapon States that share this view that disarmament can be a facilitator in easing tensions. The Nuclear Weapons States have a responsibility to answer the international community's demand for concrete progress on their legally binding disarmament obligations and to extend every effort to ensure a new arms race does not begin.

There are also many significant actions the Nuclear Weapon States could take within the framework of the NPT. These include legally binding negative security assurances, risk reduction measures and increased transparency. These, and the full and effective implementation of past agreements, would significantly reduce international tensions and reinforce the multilateral system to which we are all committed.

Chair,

The NPT is a dynamic instrument and we as States Parties have a duty to ensure it adapts to meet the challenges presented by an increasingly complex and uncertain international environment.

In this regard, the Humanitarian Consequences Working Paper highlights a number of issues that have not traditionally been considered in the context of the NPT, including the profound and long-term damage to human health, the environment, climate and socio-economic development that any detonation of a nuclear weapon would have for the planet.

Similarly, the working paper on Integrating Gender Perspectives in the NPT broadens and enriches our discussions. It encourages States Parties to consider practical ways to improve gender equality in their delegations and to apply a gender analysis to issues covered across all three pillars of the NPT. I encourage all delegations to step outside the traditional, one dimensional security approach to addressing nuclear weapons and to engage on these emerging issues in a pragmatic and positive way.

Chair,

The current status quo in relation to nuclear disarmament is unsustainable and in need of urgent change. We must be creative and original in our approach to achieving our shared goal of a world without nuclear weapons. The Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons finally puts in place a workable legal framework for the total elimination of nuclear weapons.

A small minority of States have raised concerns that TPNW could undermine the NPT. As a leading proponent of the NPT over 60 years ago, and now as a leading proponent of the TPNW, Ireland is confident that the TPNW strengthens and

reinforces the NPT. The text of the TPNW itself reaffirms the NPT as the cornerstone of the disarmament and non-proliferation regime. It is a facilitator, not an impediment, to progress on the implementation of Article VI and both treaties recognise that nuclear weapons must eventually be eliminated.

The continued reliance on nuclear deterrence in military doctrines and ever-increasing modernisation programmes poses a great threat to the sustainability of the NPT. Ireland calls on all States Parties to the NPT to engage constructively with the TPNW and to move beyond the hostile rhetoric that has characterised the much of the nuclear disarmament debate recently. In order to move forward it will be essential to realise that while we all may not walk the same path; we all share the same desired destination of a world free of nuclear weapons.

Chair,

Ireland warmly welcomes UN Secretary General Guterres' Agenda for Disarmament, which aims to return multilateral disarmament and non-proliferation to its central role in building international peace and security. It presents us with a rare opportunity to break the stalemate, as well as help to facilitate the achievement of the Sustainable Development Goals.

As such, Ireland has indicated its intention to act as a Champion for three of the Actions outlined in the Agenda, including Action 1 on Facilitating Dialogue for Nuclear Disarmament. We look forward to working closely with all partners to ensure that we make progress on the implementation of the Agenda.

Chair,

The DPRK's nuclear activities continue to pose serious challenges to non-proliferation. The openness to dialogue that has emerged over the last year has been welcome, but it is essential that words are substantiated by concrete actions. Any credible denuclearisation agreement should include signing and ratifying the CTBT, agreeing IAEA safeguards – and of course, a return to the NPT.

Ireland believes that the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action (JCPOA) agreed between the E3+3 and Iran remains a hugely significant non-proliferation agreement. The deal is a concrete demonstration of what can be achieved through effective multilateralism. It is very encouraging that all obligations under the terms of the JCPOA are being complied with and we call on all parties to continue to implement the deal in full.

Progress towards the establishment of a zone free of nuclear weapons and all other weapons of mass destruction and their delivery systems in the Middle East will be essential if we are to realise a successful outcome to this NPT Review Cycle. The full implementation of the 1995 resolution on the Middle East is long overdue and parties are understandably frustrated at the stagnation that has prevailed in this forum. Overcoming the stalemate on this issue to find a practical way forward would strengthen international peace and security, promote regional stability and bolster the provisions of the NPT. Ireland will host a side event on this specific issue during this PrepCom to provide a space for an informal discussion on potential ways progress can be made.

The crucial work of the IAEA on the peaceful applications of nuclear technologies across the broad spectrum of nuclear energy, safety and security is indispensable. While Ireland maintains a policy of not using nuclear energy for the generation of electricity, we are conscious of, and greatly value, the societal benefits that can result from the peaceful uses of nuclear technologies. We strongly support the activities of the IAEA in developing nuclear-related science and technologies and to promote their application in the service of the Sustainable Developments Goals.

Chair,

Allow me to conclude by emphasising our hope for this session to reach agreement on consensus recommendations for the 2020 Review Conference. At a minimum, Ireland urges States Parties to resolve all remaining procedural issues for the Review Conference, including the appointment of the President-Designate. The short time we will have in 2020 must be dedicated to a serious review of substantive issues and not be consumed by procedural issues.

In turbulent times, it is worth remembering that there are many issues on which we are all likeminded. By focusing on what unites us – our shared commitment to the fundamental tenets of the NPT, nuclear disarmament, non-proliferation and peaceful uses – we can collectively ensure the success of this Review Cycle and the vision set out over sixty years ago in the Irish Resolutions to achieve a world free of nuclear weapons.

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