

Statement by the United States in Cluster 1: Nuclear Disarmament

**Third Session of the Preparatory Committee for the
2020 Review Conference of the Parties to the
Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons**

**Ambassador Robert Wood
U.S. Permanent Representative to the Conference on Disarmament**

**New York
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Mr. Chairman,

The United States is committed to making progress on achieving a world without nuclear weapons, in accordance with Article VI of the NPT. Our commitment is longstanding and serious, building on past arms reductions with a readiness to engage in negotiations that deliver real security to the American people and our allies, as well as advance our collective nonproliferation and disarmament efforts.

The United States continues to strongly support the work of the International Partnership for Nuclear Disarmament Verification (IPNDV). Now in its second phase, IPNDV continues to demonstrate that collaboration between states with and without nuclear weapons can lead to real, tangible progress in the field of nuclear disarmament verification.

The IPNDV is an important tool with which the international community can help achieve the NPT's disarmament vision. The United States, more than 25 partner countries, and the European Union are working together to identify critical gaps and technical challenges associated with monitoring and verifying nuclear disarmament. The IPNDV is also building and diversifying international capacity and expertise on nuclear disarmament monitoring and verification.

At last year's NPT PrepCom, the United States also called for a dialogue to address the underlying security concerns that have made nuclear deterrence necessary to forestall major power conflict and maintain global stability. As we noted then, such a dialogue would embody the spirit of the NPT, the preamble of which refers to "the easing of international tension and the strengthening of trust between States in order to facilitate" disarmament.

As you have heard from my colleague earlier this week, the Administration's Creating an Environment for Nuclear Disarmament (CEND) initiative seeks to enable further progress toward nuclear disarmament, a goal we all share as States Party to the NPT. The CEND initiative grew out of an effort to think creatively but realistically about how to move forward on nuclear disarmament. The traditional, numerically-focused "step-by-step" approach to arms control has gone as far as it can under today's conditions. The dramatic reductions in nuclear arsenals that took place when Cold War tensions eased have largely run their course, and security conditions have become much less favorable.

The CEND initiative is intended to examine and address challenges to the global security environment. As we look around the world, we see a long list of such challenges. Long-running regional tensions remain high in South Asia, the Middle East, and elsewhere. Nuclear stockpiles are growing in Asia. Some nuclear-armed states are modernizing and expanding their nuclear capabilities at the same time they are becoming increasingly assertive in challenging the existing international order. Even as we recognize the difficulty of solving intractable regional issues, we also assert that good faith dialogue around these and other issues can improve the global security environment and facilitate further disarmament.

Our just-released working paper details how the CEND Initiative will move from concept to operation, beginning with the Creating the Environment Working Group (CEWG) kickoff Plenary, scheduled for this summer in Washington, D.C. We expect the activities of the CEWG and its subgroups to continue through this NPT review cycle and beyond, contributing to deliberations at the 2020 Review Conference. Key to its success is the full engagement of its politically and geographically diverse participants, who will ultimately determine the substance of the CEWG discussions, as well as the outcomes of those discussions. We also intend, in partnership with the CENDWG members, to sustain contact with the broader international community that is interested in engaging with CEND.

The United States also continues to support the commencement of negotiations on a Fissile Material Cutoff Treaty (FMCT), provided that negotiations are governed by consensus and all the key states participate. An end to the production of fissile material for use in nuclear weapons – the principal objective of an FMCT – is an essential step toward the ultimate goal of a world without nuclear weapons, and negotiating an FMCT remains a key component of the global nonproliferation and disarmament agenda. We therefore reiterate our call for all countries that have not yet done so to declare and maintain moratoria on such production. This is a clear example of the type of “effective measure” – within the meaning of Article VI of the NPT – that would help create an environment that is suitable to future nuclear disarmament.

Mr. Chairman,

The United States believes these challenges must be faced, and solutions sought. We must not pretend that the challenges of disarmament can be met if we try to reduce or prohibit nuclear weapons while ignoring the challenges of the security environment, for that is an approach doomed to failure. Nor can we simply sit back and wait for the international security environment to improve, for if we do nothing, things will likely only get worse – again, a disarmament approach doomed to failure. This is yet another reason why responsible nations must be united in our objective of ensuring effective verification of arms control, nonproliferation, and disarmament commitments and obligations, all of which contribute to creating an environment conducive to further progress toward nuclear disarmament. All nations can and should work toward such an environment, and the United States looks forward to engaging with them in order to do so.

Thank you, Mr. Chairman.