

Check against delivery

**STATEMENT BY MS. LACHEZARA STOEVA,
DEPUTY PERMANENT REPRESENTATIVE OF BULGARIA TO THE UNITED NATIONS
2019 PREPARATORY COMMITTEE FOR THE 2020 REVIEW CONFERENCE OF THE
PARTIES TO THE TREATY ON THE NON-PROLIFERATION OF NUCLEAR WEAPONS
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Mr. Chair,

Bulgaria aligns itself with the statement made on behalf of the European Union yesterday as well as the one made by Japan on behalf of a group of states. I would like to highlight a few points of particular importance to my country.

Bulgaria's commitment to achieving the objective of a world free of nuclear weapons remains as strong as ever. The current international security environment requires an approach that engages all states, and it particular the nuclear weapons states, so that this goal can be fulfilled.

Therefore, we are convinced that a progressive approach based on practical and concrete measures is the most feasible avenue to that end. This approach does take into account both the security dimension as well as the risks posed by nuclear weapons. The progressive approach is based on the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty, and in particular Article VI, as the only framework for advancement in nuclear disarmament. We should all concentrate on the current review cycle of the NPT, as well as on fulfilling the commitments of 1995, 2000 and 2010 Review Conferences in all three pillars of the Treaty.

The entry into force of the Comprehensive Nuclear Test Ban Treaty is a matter of utmost priority in this regard. Bulgaria, as an Annex II state, has assumed its responsibility and has ratified the Treaty. We call on all states, especially on all Annex II states, to sign and ratify the CTBT without delay.

The commencement of negotiations within the Conference on Disarmament on a fissile material cut-off treaty (FMCT) is another necessary element that will bring us closer to a world without nuclear weapons. This would further the implementation of the NPT and its Article VI and reinforce non-proliferation norms and obligations.

The current security environment requires that no efforts are spared to build trust and confidence. Therefore, credible verification is essential for an effective nuclear disarmament. In this regard, we welcome the consensus report of the Group of Governmental Experts, as well as the ongoing work in other fora, such as the International Partnership for Nuclear Disarmament Verification (IPNDV). They can greatly inform our work and contribute to the development of strong verification measures.

Mr. Chair,

The further reduction of strategic and non-strategic nuclear weapons stockpiles in unilateral, bilateral and plurilateral context is another element of the progressive approach towards global nuclear disarmament.

The INF Treaty has been a key element of the Euro-Atlantic security for over 30 years. However, a situation in which only one of the sides is in compliance is not sustainable. We call on the Russian Federation to return to full and verifiable compliance prior to the expiry of the six-month withdrawal notice, so that the treaty can be preserved.

An extension of the START Treaty beyond 2021 is also of utmost importance. Therefore, we urge the Russian Federation and the United States to work and reach an agreement to that end.

Mr. Chair,

In concluding, let me reiterate Bulgaria's commitment to achieving a world without nuclear weapons in a realistic and pragmatic manner, as outlined in the progressive approach.

Thank you!