

Statement for General Debate on the Progressive Approach

Second Preparatory Committee for the 2020 Review Conference of the Parties to the Treaty on the Non- Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT)

Geneva, 23 April – 4 May 2018

Mr Chairperson

I take the floor on behalf of Albania, Australia, Belgium, Bulgaria, Canada, Czech Republic, Denmark, Estonia, Finland, Germany, Greece, Hungary, Iceland, Italy, Japan, Latvia, Lithuania, Luxembourg, Montenegro, the Netherlands, Norway, Poland, Portugal, the Republic of Korea, Romania, Slovakia, Slovenia, Spain, and Turkey.

1. The 50th anniversary of the NPT in 2020 obliges us to be forward-looking and focus on common interests in supporting and strengthening the NPT. We need to narrow differences and find space for compromise in order to advance our shared goal of a world without nuclear weapons.
2. We are firmly committed to this goal and believe it is best pursued through a progressive approach that takes pragmatic and effective steps, which move us toward achieving and maintaining Global Zero in a safe and secure manner.
3. This requires consideration of the international security environment on prospects for progress, without losing sight of the broader concerns about the risks posed by nuclear weapons. Indeed, the NPT has always been an instrument that has sought to balance ambitious aims with geopolitical realities.
4. The direct threat to the nuclear non-proliferation regime posed by North Korea is one of those realities. North Korea's nuclear and ballistic missile programs pose a grave and increasing threat to regional as well as global security, and a serious challenge to the NPT. This concern is widely shared by the global community.

5. Moreover, international events leave us concerned by diverging views on nuclear disarmament, evident across a range of multilateral forums, about how best to advance multilateral nuclear disarmament.
6. We appreciate these differences, but they should not inhibit our efforts to collaborate on areas where there is a convergence of views.
7. This PrepCom comes at an opportune time. Now, more than ever, NPT States Parties must find common ground, across all three mutually reinforcing pillars of the Treaty.
8. No progress on nuclear disarmament is possible without the direct involvement of those possessing nuclear weapons. It is essential that we engage nuclear weapons states who have special responsibilities in this area, in ways, which build the trust necessary for further reductions in their arsenals. This is only possible through the constructive and sustained engagement, across regions, of all States Parties.
9. The NPT is the cornerstone of global non-proliferation and disarmament architecture, contributing to peace and security– with its safeguards and verification arrangements.
10. The NPT provides the foundation for States to work together on key building blocks or elements to achieve common objectives, even if we have our differences regarding how exactly to advance multilateral nuclear disarmament. It contains hard-won treaty-level commitments towards the elimination of all nuclear weapons, as provided in Article VI. We should take this occasion to reaffirm collectively this goal and we should continue pursuing effective and inclusive measures.

Thank you