

## **General Debate Statement**

### **Made by Belgium on behalf of a group of States**

#### **Third Preparatory Committee for the 2020 Review Conference of the States Parties to the Treaty in the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons**

Mr Chair,

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

With this Preparatory Committee, we set the stage for the 2020 Review Conference and the 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty (NPT).

The NPT remains a singular accomplishment. Since 1970, it has been the cornerstone of the global non-proliferation and disarmament architecture, contributing to peace and security with its safeguards and verification arrangements.

These accomplishments could not have been made without successful Review Conferences, and we need to continue to focus on our common interests in supporting and strengthening the Treaty, to maintain our commitments, and to narrow differences and find space for compromise so as to advance our shared goal of a world without nuclear weapons.

A critical step in this effort is to protect the international rules based order of which the NPT is an indispensable part. We must also resist the erosion of the non-proliferation and disarmament architecture which is already under extreme stress.

All NPT-States Parties have a commitment towards a nuclear weapon free world, but ultimately, the Nuclear Weapon States must assume their NPT responsibilities, including under Article VI. Building trust and confidence will play an important role in this regard. Achieving this is only possible through the constructive and sustained engagement, across regions, of all stakeholders.

While all States Parties should be conscious of the international security environment, and recognize the constraints it may impose at a given time, inaction is not an answer, instead we need to move forward collaboratively in ways that reduce the risks posed by nuclear weapons. To this end, we are open to helpful

initiatives that take into account the prevailing international situation while spurring dialogue on how to advance nuclear disarmament in practical terms.

We remain committed to the goal of a nuclear-weapon-free world. Concrete steps and practical groundwork are needed to advance that goal. To this end, we believe we should pursue pragmatic, inclusive measures including: universalization of the NPT, early entry into force of the CTBT, immediate negotiation in the Conference on Disarmament of a Treaty to ban the production of fissile material for nuclear weapons, cooperation on nuclear disarmament verification, a reaffirmation or tightening of existing Negative Security Assurances, greater transparency on nuclear arsenals, an inclusive dialogue on nuclear doctrines and measures aimed at nuclear risk reduction.

Our approach also includes a more pro-active engagement and dialogue with the Nuclear Weapon States. In this context, we call on the United States of America and the Russian Federation to show leadership in their disarmament efforts, including on New START, and by engaging in consultations on possible further reductions in nuclear weapon systems, both deployed and non-deployed, strategic and non-strategic.

This Preparatory Committee provides us all with a chance to exchange views on the challenges and opportunities for progress under the NPT, to make a frank assessment of what we can do collectively to uphold, implement and strengthen NPT norms, and to make recommendations to the Review Conference.

Over the next two weeks, our delegations intend to play a constructive role in these discussions in order to help lay the ground for a successful Review Conference.

Thank you.