

Non-Proliferation and Disarmament Initiative
First Committee of the 74th Session of the General Assembly

Thematic discussion on Cluster 1: Nuclear Weapons

Mr. Chair,

On behalf of the member states of the Non-Proliferation and Disarmament Initiative (NPDI) – Canada, Chile, Germany, Japan, Mexico, the Netherlands, Nigeria, the Philippines, Poland, Turkey, the United Arab Emirates, and my own country, Australia – I congratulate you on your election as Chair and assure you of the NPDI's strong support.

As we approach the 2020 Review Conference marking the 50th anniversary of the NPT's entry into force as well as the 10th anniversary of the NPDI's establishment, the NPDI remains fully committed to achieving a successful outcome to mark these important occasions by progressing global nuclear disarmament and non-proliferation goals.

We reaffirm the critical importance of dialogue and concerted action to achieve our shared goal of a world free of nuclear weapons. We are deeply committed to our core mandate to strengthen implementation of the NPT based on the 2010 Action Plan, as declared in the First NPDI Ministerial Statement in September 2010 and reaffirmed in the NPDI Ministerial statement in September 2017. The current international security environment is fraught with uncertainty and tension. It compels us to take bold and creative steps to uphold the NPT and strengthen implementation of its provisions, in the 2020 NPT Review Cycle, and beyond.

The NPDI remains intent on contributing to a successful outcome of the 2020 NPT Review Conference that comprehensively addresses all three pillars of the NPT (non-proliferation, disarmament and peaceful uses). The NPDI's engagement is further reflected in the fact that two NPDI members, Poland and the Netherlands, chaired the 2017 and 2018 Preparatory Committee, and will chair Main Committees II and III respectively at the 2020 NPT Review Conference. We urge all States Parties to fully comply with their obligations and commitments under the NPT, particularly with the full and prompt implementation of the 2010 Action Plan. The NPDI will continue to develop new ideas and initiatives to assist in finding common ground among NPT member states.

Sustained, high-level political leadership and diplomatic dialogue as well as an unwavering commitment to the NPT are needed to make concrete progress towards achieving deeper reductions in nuclear arsenals worldwide and towards the total elimination of nuclear weapons. In this context, the NPDI would like to reiterate the need for confidence-building measures to contribute to improving the deteriorating international security environment.

Mr. Chair,

One such confidence-building measure, and signature NPDI initiative, is to encourage better transparency through the submission of NPT national reports and interactive discussions on the implementation of NPT commitments. We welcome the recent submission of national reports by NPT States Parties, including nuclear-weapon States China and the United Kingdom. The NPDI encourages all States Parties to submit their national reports in order to facilitate further dialogue and enhance confidence-building towards nuclear disarmament. We also highlight the

importance of using a standard reporting form, as well as to agree on a standard reporting interval.

Another NPDI flagship initiative is to strengthen the NPT review process. Improving the effectiveness of the review process is an ongoing responsibility of States Parties, and should not be dismissed as merely procedural. We must ask ourselves how the Treaty's long-standing working methods and practices could be updated and improved upon to facilitate further substantive progress, and to ensure the success of Review Conferences, and of the Treaty's implementation overall. The NPDI delivered a joint statement on behalf of a cross-political group of 48 states at the 2019 PrepCom, calling for a discussion of this issue at the Review Conference, and will engage in broad outreach on how to move this debate forward.

Mr. Chair,

The NPDI has demonstrated its commitment to make practical and concrete contributions to advance nuclear disarmament, including through the submission of 15 working papers during the current Review process. The NPDI continues to press for the inclusion of disarmament verification measures in the NPT. Our commitment to the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty (CTBT) is exemplified by all NPDI member states having signed and ratified the Treaty, and by Germany's recent co-chairing of so-called the Article XIV conference to facilitate entry into force on 25 September 2019. We reiterate the urgent call to all States yet to sign and ratify the treaty, particularly the eight remaining Annex 2 States, to do so without further delay. The NPDI also calls upon all States to reaffirm support for the immediate commencement of a negotiation to conclude a treaty to ban the production of fissile material for nuclear weapons or other nuclear explosive devices (FMCT), building upon previous work. The NPDI invites the First Committee to consider favorably the annual resolutions on these issues.

The NPDI is a longstanding champion of disarmament and non-proliferation education. We encourage all States to nurture the critical thinking skills and knowledge that enable us to find creative solutions to advance nuclear disarmament and non-proliferation.

Mr. Chair,

We remain united and focused on the NPT's objective to prevent the spread of nuclear weapons and weapons technology, to promote cooperation in the peaceful uses of nuclear technology, and to further the goal of achieving nuclear disarmament. We reaffirm our commitment to the international community's goal of complete, verifiable and irreversible dismantlement of all North Korea's weapons of mass destruction and ballistic missiles of all ranges, as well as its related programs and facilities, in accordance with United Nations Security Council (UNSC) resolutions. We call on all members of the international community to fully implement relevant UNSC resolutions.

Mr. Chair,

As a diverse cross-regional group of non-nuclear-weapon States, the NPDI will continue to play a constructive and proactive role in facilitating discussions on these and other challenging issues and finding common ground to help reinvigorate the NPT Review process.

I thank you, Mr. Chair.