

General Statement by
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General Debate
The Third Preparatory Committee for the 2026 NPT Review
Conference
(New York, April 28, 2025)

Mr. Chair,
Distinguished Delegates,
Ladies and Gentlemen,

First and foremost, I express my sincere congratulations to Your Excellency Ambassador Harold Agyeman for assuming the Chair of the Third Preparatory Committee for the 2026 NPT Review Conference. I will assure you that my delegation will spare no effort to support your work.

(NPT as a framework of international cooperation based on multilateralism)

Mr. Chair,

Eighty years ago, humanity witnessed the enormous power that atomic energy can unleash. We have determined to manage it to avoid the total annihilation of humanity and have used it for the betterment of civilization. The NPT, created as a result of such endeavors, is the sole universal framework for nuclear disarmament and non-proliferation, and can be described as the embodiment of humanity's wisdom.

Today, as the international order based on the rule of law is being challenged, we are facing very severe security environment. We are seeing accelerating moves that run counter to the progress of nuclear disarmament or threaten nuclear non-proliferation, such as the rapid buildup of nuclear capabilities in an opaque manner and the advancement of North Korea's nuclear and missile activities. The frameworks for international cooperation based on multilateralism, including the NPT, also face difficulties.

We must protect and foster an international order based on the rule of law. What is needed now is an effort to ease the divisions in the international community, restore and strengthen the functioning of international cooperation frameworks based on multilateralism.

We, the States Parties to the NPT, have failed to adopt outcome documents at the past two Review Conferences. For this reason, some claim that the NPT architecture is in crisis. This 2026 Review Process will play an indispensable role to unite the international community around its three pillars of the NPT. I call on all State Parties to cherish and exercise the spirit of dialogue and collaboration to this end and work together at next year's Review Conference.

(Voices calling "a World without Nuclear Weapons")

Mr. Chair,

Last year, Nihon-Hidankyo was awarded the Nobel Peace Prize. The Hibakusha have worked tirelessly, despite their deep emotional and psychological wounds and scars, to raise awareness of the devastation caused by nuclear weapons. Many of you may recall the scene at the UN General Assembly Second Special Session devoted to Disarmament in 1982, when a Hibakusha stood on the podium of the General Assembly Hall and powerfully appealed to the international community, saying, "No More Hiroshima, No More Nagasaki!!"

The cry that the tragedies of nuclear weapons must never be repeated and the call for achieving a "World without Nuclear Weapons" are now louder than ever. The NPT architecture must respond to those earnest wishes of people around the world. It is our shared responsibility and moral imperative to find common ground, step by step, among States Parties.

(Recommendations by the International Group of Eminent Persons)

Today, I brought with me the recommendations of the International Group of Eminent Persons for a World without Nuclear Weapons, or IGEP, which Japan launched back in 2022. Renowned experts from twelve countries, including the five Nuclear Weapons States, compiled a set of proposals by consensus, after two and a half years of discussions under the shared goal of a “World without Nuclear Weapons.”

The IGEP recommendations propose various actions to be taken to achieve a “World without Nuclear Weapons” under the current severe international security environment with a realistic and practical approach. This is an eloquent example of how engaging in sincere dialogue and constructive discussion can create a wisdom, even in this increasingly divided world. We should, as NPT States Parties, return to that origin of the NPT and find out what we can agree on.

(Dialogue and Collaboration towards the 2026 Review Conference)

Mr. Chair,

In the North Delegates Lounge on the second floor of this conference building at the UN Headquarters, there hangs a tapestry with a line from a Romanian poem. The poem, “Ode to Man”, blends the ancient legend of Prometheus with the prospect of new possibilities brought about by the discovery of atomic energy. The presentation ceremony was held in 1968, the same year the NPT was signed. Then-Secretary-General U Thant stated that this tapestry demonstrates the balance between two possibilities--on the one side destruction, on the other peace and fertility. Whether atomic energy leads us to peace and prosperity or destruction and annihilation ultimately depends on us present here today.

Our predecessors created the NPT as a framework of international cooperation to never repeat the devastation and sacrifices of the past war. We must, at all costs, maintain and strengthen this framework. Next year's Review Conference exists for this very purpose. Japan will make its utmost effort to maintain the NPT and improve its functioning, while enhancing transparency and accountability. My country also pledges its full support to the President of next year's Review Conference.

I would like to call upon all NPT States Parties to cooperate in the spirit of dialogue and collaboration so that the 2026 Review conference will be remembered in posterity as a step towards the revival of this universal framework in the fields of nuclear disarmament, non-proliferation, and the peaceful uses of nuclear energy.

Compared with this ambitious goal, what we can achieve here and now may only be one small step. Still, it is the first important step. Let us rise-up and build together. Towards one giant leap.

Thank you for your kind attention.

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