

REDUCING THE RISK OF NUCLEAR CONFLICT
JOINT STATEMENT 3RD SESSION OF NPT PREPCOM

Mr. Chair,

I am taking the floor on behalf of 35 State parties : Argentina, Australia, Brazil, Benin, Canada, Chile, Croatia, Denmark, Estonia, Finland, France, Georgia, Germany, Guatemala, Ireland, Italy, Japan, Kazakhstan, Latvia, Lithuania, Mexico, Nigeria, Norway, Peru, the Republic of Korea, the Republic of Moldova, Romania, Sweden, Switzerland, Thailand, Ukraine, the United Arab Emirates, the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland, the United States of America and my own country, the Philippines. Building on our joint statement at the 2nd Preparatory Committee of the Non-proliferation Treaty, as part of our overall goal of nuclear disarmament, we reaffirm our commitment to reducing the risk of nuclear conflict, in paving the way towards disarmament.

Risk reduction is in no way a substitute for nuclear disarmament, nor should it in any way detract from efforts towards disarmament. To the contrary, pending the elimination of nuclear weapons, risk reduction goes hand in hand with the need to realize Article VI goals and contributes to our enduring interest in the prevention of nuclear war.

Avoiding escalation and reducing risks of nuclear weapons use is a matter of urgency in the current deteriorating security environment.

While pursuing nuclear disarmament-related goals under the NPT and respecting legitimate interests of non-nuclear weapon states, nuclear weapon States bear the primary responsibility in preventing nuclear conflict. Additional efforts by nuclear weapon States in this regard include measures to enhance trust, promote transparency, and advance nuclear disarmament. At the same time, all NPT States Parties must play an active role in promoting nuclear disarmament and contributing to reducing risks of nuclear weapon use.

NPT States Parties have long recognized the importance of reducing the risks of nuclear conflict. Indeed, the preamble to the NPT opens with the words “considering the devastation that would be visited upon all mankind by a nuclear war and the consequent need to avert the danger of such war and to take measures to safeguard the security of peoples.”. Furthermore, States Parties called for measures to minimize the risk that nuclear weapons are ever used in both the 2000 NPT Practical Steps and the 2010 NPT Action Plan.

Reducing the risks of nuclear conflict and arms races and promoting further progress in nuclear disarmament are our immediate objectives. We seek to support

the urgent development of concrete, credible, and practical measures that could reduce the risk of nuclear weapon use, and move States from dialogue to action, from proposals to implementation. This should be an objective of all nuclear weapon States.

All nuclear weapon States have in the recent past highlighted the need to pursue strategic risk reduction measures and substantive bilateral and multilateral dialogues on the subject, as evidenced by the 2022 Joint Statement of the Leaders of the Five Nuclear-Weapon States on Preventing Nuclear War and Avoiding Arms Races and the strategic risk reduction working paper submitted by the nuclear-weapon States in 2021.

There is a rich tradition of unilateral, bilateral, and multilateral risk reduction measures, ranging from transparency and communication, restraint on doctrines and deployment, to negative security assurances and negotiations on nuclear arms control and disarmament. These measures have helped to prevent nuclear war for decades, and we need to ensure they are being implemented by all relevant actors today.

We simultaneously reaffirm our unwavering commitment to implementing Article VI of the NPT and continued efforts towards nuclear disarmament, including through reciprocal and verifiable agreements, with a view to promoting international peace and security.

As the UN Secretary General has emphasized on multiple occasions, the risk of nuclear conflict is rising. The case has never been clearer for concrete action. At this juncture, we stress the consequent need to make every effort towards reducing the risk of nuclear conflict and encourage the next Review Conference to incite States Parties to consider this issue. We stand ready to work with States Parties to find common ground in this regard.