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**3rd Session of the Preparatory Committee
of the 2010 Review Conference of the States Parties to the
Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons**

(General debate)

Statement by

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Permanent Representative of Switzerland

to the Disarmament Conference

New York, 4 May 2009

M President,

I would like to begin by saying on behalf of my delegation how pleased we are that you are chairing this 3rd Session of the Preparatory Committee of the Review Conference of the NPT for 2010 and I would like to assure you of our full cooperation.

Mr President,

It is not in our view an exaggeration to state that the last two sessions of the Preparatory Committee – i.e. that of 2007 in Vienna and that of 2008 in Geneva – produced relatively meagre results. No consensus was reached on a substantive final document and the sessions merely adopted a purely procedural report.

The causes that led to such meagre results were virtually the same as those which led to the disappointing conclusion of the previous cycle. In each case, irreconcilable positions were adopted concerning the state of implementation of the NPT. As a result, it was impossible to reach agreement on the priorities needed to strengthen the non-proliferation regime. This fundamental difference of approach seems to persist to this day. I would summarise it as follows:

- Firstly, there are certain States parties whose main concern is to stress the risks of nuclear proliferation and the means of combating it.
- Secondly, there are other States parties whose main preoccupation is the slowness of nuclear disarmament and its negative impact in terms of international security.
- Thirdly, there is an increasing number of States parties in which energy concerns predominate and which do not accept that their rights of access to nuclear technology should be restricted because of the fight against proliferation.

Mr President,

These different concerns are directly linked to one of the three pillars that make up the NPT regime. Hence it seems to us that the very sources of disagreement contain in themselves the makings of a possible compromise, one which would satisfy the differing sensibilities of the States parties as a whole and would lessen the frequently stated impression that double standards apply.

After too many years in which the philosophy of compromise and the culture of multilateralism – both fundamental aspects of the NPT - have been neglected, we believe

that it is now essential that we should restore these values to their rightful place. In the view of my delegation, such a measure can only be realised if all States parties commit themselves to work towards a re-adjustment of the emphasis to be placed on each of the three pillars of the NPT. We are convinced that an approach of this kind can only have beneficial effects for the Treaty. The three pillars are inextricably linked with one another. This means that a substantial effort in the field of nuclear disarmament is the best guarantee against the risks of proliferation. Likewise, respect for the rights of the States parties as set out in Article IV will undoubtedly facilitate acceptance of the duties that these rights imply and will favour a dispassionate debate in the context of the ongoing discussions on the nuclear fuel cycle.

Another aspect that should not be neglected in this re-adjustment exercise is the implementation as soon as possible of the acquis of the previous review conferences by all States parties. The non-nuclear-weapon States in their totality accepted the extension of the NPT for an indefinite period in 1995. However, the "Principles and Objectives for Nuclear Non-Proliferation and Disarmament" that were adopted in return, as well as the "13 Practical Steps" of 2000, are still far from being realised in full.

Mr President,

Despite this, the 3rd Session of the Preparatory Committee is taking place in a period where there are grounds for optimism. Since the beginning of the year there have been a number of encouraging signals, especially in the area of nuclear disarmament. I would like to quote as an example the clear commitment by the presidents of Russia and of the United States during their meeting in London on 1 April 2009 to start negotiations on a new accord to succeed START I. This commitment – which was confirmed by president Obama in his important speech on 5 April 2009 in Prague – has since been followed by the first meetings between Russian and US officials.

Parallel to this bilateral level, I would also like to mention the prospects which seem to be emerging at the multilateral level at the Conference on Disarmament in Geneva.

Mr President,

Switzerland hopes that this 3rd Session will provide an opportunity to confirm these developments and to give fresh impetus to the full implementation of the NPT and to the

multilateral machinery as a whole. A new and positive atmosphere has been created and a window of opportunity such as we have not seen for a decade has opened.

We therefore encourage all States parties to work constructively so that a rapid solution can be found to the procedural questions concerning the 2010 Review Conference – notably the adoption of an agenda and of a programme of work. This will undoubtedly help to strengthen the chances of success of the conference.

Finally, my country is looking forward to participating actively in this session and to discussing various ideas to strengthen the NPT regime.

Mr President, thank you for your attention.