

2015 Review Conference of the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons

Main Committee I: Disarmament

Statement by Canada

Mr. Chairman,

We welcome this year's Review Conference as an important opportunity to reiterate our unshakeable commitment to advancing the cause of nuclear disarmament. Colleagues know well Canada's longstanding support for a step-by-step approach to disarmament. This commitment stems from the belief that realistic, practical efforts can build progressively upon each other to implement the commitments enshrined in Article VI. While we seek progress across all major lines of work concurrently, we continue to take a view that pragmatism is paramount and a lack of progress in one area should not prevent the international community from seeking to advance others.

In this light, it is important to acknowledge that, since the successful outcome of the last NPT RevCon in 2010, some progress has been achieved but much more remains to be done.

The discussion of the humanitarian consequences of nuclear weapons has raised awareness of the need to move towards our common goal of a world free of nuclear weapons. Recognition of the conscience-shaking consequences of nuclear war underpins our efforts to pursue practical and effective nuclear disarmament. These consequences are not constrained by borders or level of development: no level of preparation could expect to mitigate the human, environmental or financial toll caused by even one nuclear weapon explosion in an urban area. Reducing and ultimately eliminating the risk that nuclear weapons will be used remains at the heart of the NPT's grand bargain. Canada was pleased to join the Australian-led joint statement in this regard.

Canada also remains convinced that any realistic prospect for progress requires that both the humanitarian and security dimension of nuclear weapons be taken into account. Disarmament does not and cannot take place in a vacuum: we need to be mindful of the strategic security context and the practical challenges facing nuclear disarmament. It is essential that the states that possess nuclear weapons must be actively engaged in the disarmament process and that international trust and confidence be reinforced. The international community needs to ensure that international security and stability will be maintained as stockpiles are drawn down and are eventually eliminated. This process will not be easy or quick, but it is essential.

Nuclear Weapon States should continue to take concrete measures to reduce the number of strategic and non-strategic weapons and to reduce their reliance on them in their security doctrines. The implementation of the New START agreement and recent unilateral reductions undertaken by the United Kingdom and France are good steps in this direction and we welcome them. However, further steps are needed to continue to reduce the number of nuclear weapons to lower levels be it through unilateral, bilateral, plurilateral or multilateral steps. Canada and its partners in the NPT have advocated for achievable progress to further the goals of reducing the alert levels and reliance on nuclear weapons. We hope that these proposals can feature as part of the final outcome of this RevCon and help chart a path forward to further real and concrete progress.

Canada welcomes the commitment of the Nuclear Weapon States during this review cycle to meet regularly to increase mutual trust and confidence and to implement their commitments made in 2010. We welcome their efforts to develop a glossary of nuclear terms and to submit more regular reports on their implementation of the Treaty. Further progress will be necessary to meet the high expectations the international community has set. We strongly encourage the Nuclear Weapon States to increase the quantity, quality, relevance and frequency of their transparency effort in line with Actions 5 and 21 of the 2010 Action Plan.

Mr. Chairman,

Canada is honoured to have chaired to successful conclusion the Group of Governmental Experts on a treaty banning the production of fissile material for nuclear weapons or other nuclear explosive devices. This collaborative effort has witnessed some of the most important technical and policy-neutral dialogue on a treaty in many years. The Group's final report offers a comprehensive review of the multiple and interrelated aspects of a treaty. It will provide useful sign posts to assist those who will negotiate a treaty in the future. The GGE served to increase interest in and momentum towards a treaty. It is now up to all states to determine how to use the Group's report and how to take forward the negotiation to which we all committed in Action 15 five years ago.

While Canada continues to believe that the Conference on Disarmament is the best venue in which to negotiate a treaty, it is not the only one in which to do so. The time has perhaps come for NPT States Parties to decide if support for negotiations exclusively in the CD is worth the price of an indefinite delay in starting those negotiations. A verifiable FMCT is the only way to ensure the tap of fissile material for nuclear weapons is turned off for good. Pending real and substantive negotiations on an FMCT, we call on the one Nuclear Weapon State that has yet to do so to unequivocally declare a moratorium on the production of fissile materials for nuclear weapons. Such a demonstration of commitment to disarmament would bring us closer to realizing the goal of one day creating the conditions leading to a world without nuclear weapons.

Another important element to achieve the eventual elimination of nuclear weapons is a fully in force Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty. Canada continues to play an active role in encouraging further signatures and ratification of the Treaty with a view to achieving its entry into force as well as its universality. We were pleased to co-host the September 2014 CTBT Ministerial Meeting, which produced a Joint Ministerial Statement that was endorsed by a record 105 states. We call on NPT States Parties that have yet to do so to sign and ratify the CTBT as soon as possible and without condition.

While the international community awaits the final eight ratifications needed to achieve entry into force, Canada also calls on all NPT States Parties to work with the CTBT Organization in Vienna to complete its robust verification system. This includes completing all stations to be a part of the International Monitoring System and contributing to the development of the Organization's on-site inspection capabilities. Canadian experts were pleased to participate in the Integrated Field Exercise in Jordan last November, particularly to monitor the use of airborne radiation detection equipment contributed by Canada in September 2013.

Mr. Chairman,

Five years ago we agreed to a series of ambitious actions to help achieve the objective of nuclear disarmament. The measures included in the 2010 Action Plan were intended to promote continuous progress to reduce nuclear arsenals while strengthening the international legal

regime against their spread. This is the surest way to prevent their use and, eventually, lead to their elimination. This RevCon offers an opportunity to assess the implementation of the 2010 Action Plan as well as commitments made at previous RevCons, notably in 2000. Canada believes this Main Committee and this RevCon should seek to identify ways to strengthen the implementation of the commitments we have made and to build upon these commitments in an outcome to this conference. Standing still cannot be considered progress if we are to one day achieve our collective goal of a world without nuclear weapons.

Thank you, Mr. Chairman

