



---

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

### Main Committee I: Nuclear Disarmament

New York, 4 May 2015

Statement by H.E. Urs Schmid  
Permanent Representative of Switzerland to the Conference on Disarmament

---

Mr. Chairman,

To reinforce the credibility of the NPT bargain, this Review Conference should chart an ambitious but realistic path forward regarding nuclear disarmament. To that end, this Main Committee should take stock of what has been achieved, over the past five years, and indicate where efforts need to be stepped up in the next review cycle.

Mr. Chairman,

In this review cycle, we have gained an increased understanding of the catastrophic humanitarian consequences of the use of nuclear weapons. The facts-based discussions in Oslo, Nayarit and Vienna, as well as deliberations in other processes and fora, have provided greater clarity about the devastating immediate and long-term humanitarian impact of a nuclear weapon detonation. They have also indicated that the consequences of a detonation could not be properly addressed and adequate assistance could not be provided to victims. The humanitarian consequences of nuclear weapons use has become an increasingly unifying factor, as underlined by the growing participation in international conferences and support for joint statements. At this Review Conference, the humanitarian dimension should unite all NPT States parties in working more resolutely and more systematically towards a world free of nuclear weapons. The developments linked to the humanitarian initiative should inform our efforts during this Review Conference,

including its outcome document. In this context, we welcome the statement made by Austria on behalf of 160 States and would like to refer to working paper 30 issued on behalf of 15 countries.

In the past five years, we have also seen a growing debate on, and awareness of, the risks associated with nuclear weapons. This Review Conference should discuss the risks of use of nuclear weapons due to miscalculation or error. Newly available information about a number of disturbing close calls or accidents must represent a wake-up call about the permanent risk posed by nuclear weapons and the need to address them. The Review Conference should also discuss the emergence of new threats associated with nuclear weapons. One such example is the possible exposure of command and early warning networks to cyber-attacks or technical malfunctions related to the use of information and communication technologies.

Switzerland therefore suggests that this Conference expresses its principled concern at the broad range of existing and emerging risks associated with nuclear weapons and nuclear installations, together with the need for adequate national and international measures to fully address these risks.

Mr. Chair,

The General Debate has shown that the Action Plan, together with the previous disarmament obligations contained in the final documents of the Review Conferences of 1995 and 2000, is our roadmap to implement Article VI. The 2015 Review Conference should make it clear that the Action Plan is not an aspirational document; rather, that its value lies in its steadfast implementation. In this regard, the 2015 stock-taking should be the basis for the elaboration of measures to be implemented in the next review cycle.

Switzerland welcomes that some nuclear-weapon States (NWS) made significant reductions in their nuclear stockpiles, dismantled warheads, decommissioned nuclear facilities, or made progress on verification procedures and other elements essential for a world free of nuclear weapons. We also welcome progress regarding the signature and ratification of protocols to nuclear weapons free zones.

However, contributions from academia and civil society, which has made various efforts to monitor progress, and lack thereof, confirm our own assessment that achievements under the disarmament-related actions remain overall unsatisfactory. We are particularly concerned about the slow progress on some of the actions – such as actions 1, 2, 3 and 5 – which are central for fulfilling the NPT's objectives.

The Review Conference should make it clear that the unequivocal undertaking by the nuclear-weapon States to accomplish the total elimination of their nuclear arsenals requires further

reductions of all types of nuclear weapons, during the next cycle. While significant reductions were made in arsenals since the height of the Cold War, the disarmament process has slowed down in recent years. Enormous destructive capacities persist, able to destroy our planet many times over – and these capacities seem to be maintained for the foreseeable future. In this regard, we are concerned that the modernization efforts might undermine the objectives of the NPT and go beyond mere security and safety related aspects. Accordingly, we are keen to better understand the motivations behind such efforts as well as their conformity with Action 1 of the action plan, which commits all States parties to pursue policies that are fully compatible with the NPT's objective of achieving a world without nuclear weapons.

We welcome the continued implementation of the Treaty on Measures for the Further Reduction and Limitation of Strategic Offensive Arms (New START) by the Russian Federation and United States of America. Existing arms control agreements, including the Intermediate-Range Nuclear Forces Treaty (INF), must be preserved. The Review Conference should give an impetus to Russia and the United States to enter negotiations to achieve deeper cuts, on all types of nuclear weapons, as outlined in Action 4.

While we welcome, in principle, the engagement among the NWS during this cycle, concrete achievements from the various P5 meetings are, in our view, modest. With regard to the next cycle, we would encourage NWS to continue, accelerate and intensify the work begun. We are calling upon the NWS to consider engaging in a more effective way that takes disarmament forward, always aiming at achieving and maintaining a world without nuclear weapons. Such an engagement is of particular importance with regard to the implementation of action 5 of the action plan.

We take note of the lack of real progress with regard to nuclear doctrines and that much remains to be done to reduce the role of nuclear weapons. We are particularly concerned that no discussions seem to have taken place about policies that could prevent the use of nuclear weapons, reduce the danger of nuclear war, or reduce the risk of accidental use of nuclear weapons. Last but not least, we regret that operational readiness has not been reduced in many years, certainly not since 2007, when the De-alerting Group first tabled a UNGA resolution. I would refer to the statement made earlier by Chile on behalf of the De-alerting Group and would also like to draw delegations' attention to the recommendations by the "Global Zero Commission on Nuclear Risk Reduction" presented at Thursday's side Event co-organised by Global Zero, New Zealand, Sweden and Switzerland.

As a consequence, nuclear weapons remain a threat to the security of States and an existential danger for humankind. It will be primordial that this Review Conference agrees on practical efforts in this area.

The submission of reports by NWS in 2014 for the first time ever represents a welcome development during the present review cycle. Transparency is an essential element in monitoring the implementation of the 2010 action plan and other commitments, and we should seek to enhance coherence among reports, the type of information provided and the periodicity of reporting. One underlying element is that 45 years after the entry into force of the NPT, a full picture of nuclear arsenals remains to be provided. A baseline followed by regular updates would be a necessity for measuring further disarmament progress. This Conference should therefore consider measures to further enhance transparency, including on all types of nuclear weapons. In this regard, we see merit in the various suggestions made to this effect.

Mr. Chair,

Legal gaps exist as nuclear weapons remain the one weapon of mass destruction that are not yet prohibited and eliminated and we are still lacking instruments leading to a nuclear-weapon-free world.

It has not been possible to commence negotiations on a treaty prohibiting the production of fissile material for nuclear weapons. Also, the Comprehensive Nuclear Test-Ban-Treaty has still not entered into force and there has been no progress regarding legally-binding negative security assurances or other legally binding disarmament instruments. And as outlined by the New Agenda Coalition, there is a lack of effective measures as called for the implementation of Article VI.

The Review Conference should advance the discussions on filling these gaps, including effective measures required for the achievement of a world without nuclear weapons. There is a legal obligation to pursue in good faith and bring to a conclusion negotiations leading to nuclear disarmament. We should advance these discussions in an inclusive way and hope for a constructive engagement by all Parties to the treaty. Several options have been put forward to address these legal gaps and there would be merit in addressing these elements in the Subsidiary Body of this committee.

Mr. Chair,

As we commemorate the use of nuclear weapons on the cities of Hiroshima and Nagasaki, we should firmly commit that nuclear weapons are never used again, under any circumstance, and to achieve the goal of a world without nuclear weapons. In this regard, we need to undertake multiple, parallel and non-sequential measures. This Review Conference is an opportunity to chart a clear path forward.