



CZECH REPUBLIC

Statement by

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**Permanent Representative of the Czech Republic
to the United Nations**

**at the Thematic Discussion on Nuclear Weapons
of the First Committee of the 71st Session
of the General Assembly of the United Nations**

New York, 17 October 2016

Mr. Chairman,

Allow me to join other delegations in congratulating you on your election as the Chairman of the First Committee. I am confident that under your able leadership this Committee will have a successful session. You can count on our cooperation and support in this regard.

The Czech Republic has been a long-term supporter of the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT), especially of universal adherence to it and full compliance with the obligations under the Treaty. As vast majority of NPT States Parties, we were also disappointed with the outcome of the last NPT Review Conference in 2015. Nevertheless, it is still our firm belief that the NPT, as the cornerstone of the global regime of nuclear non-proliferation and disarmament, remains indispensable for our global security and will continue to serve as a fundamental instrument for taking forward nuclear disarmament and non-proliferation. With the aim to preserve and strengthen its authority and integrity, all of us must do our best to ensure that the next review cycle is successful. The first important opportunity to show our joint determination will be next May in Vienna, which will host the first Preparatory Committee.

The Czech Republic remains fully committed to the objective of achieving and maintenance of a world without nuclear weapons. In this regard, we take note of increasing number of calls for convening of a conference in 2017 to negotiate a legally-binding instrument to prohibit nuclear weapons. We are of the opinion, however, that the legal ban negotiated in such a manner would in no way guarantee elimination of the existing nuclear arsenals. Instead, an effective disarmament strategy, firmly rooted in the NPT and taking duly into account both security and humanitarian considerations, should recognize that elimination of nuclear weapons is a long-term process that will not succeed without engaging in a constructive and open-minded dialogue with nuclear-weapon states. We are of the view that total elimination of nuclear weapons can only be realized through mutually reinforcing practical measures and in the presence of a robust verification regime that can provide credible assurances of irreversible disarmament.

The Czech Republic, being the first European country to ratify the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty (CTBT), would like to reaffirm its support to the process leading to its entry into force, which will significantly strengthen the international security architecture based on the NPT. For that reason, we urgently call upon those States that have not yet signed or ratified the CTBT to do so as soon as possible. This call is addressed in particular to the remaining States listed in Annex 2 to the CTBT, whose ratification is necessary for its entry into force. In this context, we welcome the reiteration of the importance of the CTBT in the

UNSC resolution 2310 and the Joint Ministerial Statement of the Eighth CTBT Ministerial Meeting, both adopted last September.

The Czech Republic is disappointed with the continuing stalemate at the Conference on Disarmament that, inter alia, doesn't allow any progress in negotiations on a legally-binding treaty banning the production of fissile material for nuclear weapons or other nuclear explosive devices (FMCT). International community needs to look for new approaches and creative solutions to reach an agreement which finally enables us to start negotiations on an FMCT as soon as possible.

The Czech Republic is appalled by the continuing acts of provocation by the DPRK and accelerating spiral of escalation in the past nine months, including two nuclear tests and over twenty ballistic missile tests across a variety of platforms and ranges. They represent clear and serious violation of the obligation to refrain from producing nuclear weapons and from testing nuclear explosive devices and long range ballistic missiles as provided for in relevant UNSC resolutions. We urge the DPRK to abandon its nuclear weapons and ballistic missile programmes in a complete, verifiable and irreversible manner and return to the NPT and IAEA safeguards immediately.

I will conclude by reiterating that the Czech Republic attaches great importance to nuclear disarmament. In 2009, it was Prague where President Obama set out his vision of a world without nuclear weapons, consequently called "Prague Agenda". We share his vision and during last five years Prague has gradually established itself as a venue for taking stock of topical issues of nuclear disarmament, arms control and non-proliferation. And we intend to continue in these endeavors as the Czech Republic will host the "Prague Agenda" conference for the sixth time this December.

I thank you for your attention.