



**REMARKS TO THE SECURITY COUNCIL MINISTERIAL MEETING
ON THE PROLIFERATION OF WEAPONS OF MASS DESTRUCTION**

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Mr. President, Excellencies, Distinguished Members of the Security Council,

The Security Council has been directly engaged in matters relating to weapons of mass destruction for sixty-five years.

This long, priority work by the Council has rested on two mutually reinforcing pillars.

One derives from the Council's responsibility for establishing a system for the regulation of armaments, as enshrined in Article 26 of the UN Charter. This objective is closely linked with the Purposes and Principles of the United Nations, and aims to promote international peace and security with the least diversion for armaments of the world's human and economic resources.

The other derives of course from the Council's primary responsibility for the maintenance of international peace and security. Pursuant to this responsibility, the Council has sought various aims, including respect for the prohibition on the use of biological and chemical weapons, ensuring compliance with international norms and treaties, preventing non-state actors from acquiring weapons of mass destruction, and addressing specific cases of proliferation.

The Council's engagement on weapons of mass destruction has always been grounded on a common understanding that measures for disarmament and non-proliferation are two sides of the same coin and are mutually-reinforcing.

The need to pursue both objectives while responding urgently to contemporary proliferation challenges was evident, when the Council adopted the resolutions in support of the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of the Nuclear Weapons. Similarly, when the Council met for the first time at the level of Heads of State and Government in 1992, disarmament and arms control was a

major focus, and it importantly determined that the proliferation of weapons of mass destruction constitutes a threat to international peace and security.

Mr. President, Excellencies,

The disarmament and non-proliferation efforts by the Council over the past twenty-five years have achieved important and historic outcomes, even as the international community continues to grapple with isolated cases of proliferation and the unresolved question of disarmament. The Council has made use of a great variety of tools towards these ends.

In this regard, I will briefly highlight a number of country-specific and general approaches.

In responding to the 1991 invasion of Kuwait, the Council required **Iraq** to eliminate its weapons of mass destruction programme and mandated on-site inspections toward this end. It has since been confirmed that those obligations were carried out and the Council has effectively normalized Iraq's international non-proliferation obligations.

With respect to the **Iranian** nuclear issue, direct engagement and a shared commitment to dialogue, and cooperation resulted in the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action, which the Council endorsed in resolution 2231. Two years later, international inspectors continue to verify the implementation of Iran's nuclear-related commitments. A sustained commitment by all participants remains essential for the long-term viability and success of this historic agreement.

In **Libya**, timely action by the Council enabled international inspectors to help the Government secure and remove vulnerable stockpiles of chemical agents.

In the **Syrian Arab Republic**, successful engagement by the Russian Federation and the United States resulted in that country eliminating its declared

chemical weapon programme under UN supervision and with unprecedented international cooperation. Regrettably, we continue to find evidence of the use of toxic chemical as weapons, which we determined has been carried out by the Government of the Syrian Arab Republic and by the Islamic State of Iraq and the Levant. In order to uphold our shared norms of humanity, all those who have used these weapons must be held to account. Unity and action by the Council remain essential.

Finally, the provocative and dangerous nuclear and ballistic missile activities by the **Democratic People's Republic of Korea** continue to defy the decisions of this Council and the will of the international community. These acts have also undermined international norms against nuclear proliferation and nuclear testing. The Secretary-General has repeatedly and unequivocally condemned these acts, and called on the DPRK to cease further testing, comply with the relevant Security Council resolutions, and allow space for the resumption of sincere dialogue on denuclearisation. The steady escalation of provocative acts must be immediately reversed. Continued unity by the Council remains essential to facilitate the resumption of diplomacy leading to a peaceful settlement.

Turning to general approaches on non-proliferation, **resolution 1540 (2004)** continues to stand as a pioneering achievement in cooperative action to prevent non-state actors from acquiring weapons of mass destruction and related material, by strengthening national capacities. In maintaining the effectiveness of this instrument, it remains imperative to keep pace with global trends and emerging technologies that continuously lower the threshold for the acquisition and use of chemical, biological, radiological and nuclear material.

Mr. President, in concluding this survey it is apparent that the most effective approaches to non-proliferation must involve a mixture of active, robust and wise diplomacy, strong international cooperation and a solid

commitment to fully implementing the decisions of the Council. Addressing the threats and risks posed by weapons of mass destruction will also require new and creative efforts to complete unfinished business, including the achievement of a world without nuclear weapons. I end my remark with the words of the Secretary-General at the opening of the General Assembly general debate two days ago, “There is an urgent need to prevent proliferation, to promote disarmament and to preserve gains made in these directions. These goals are linked. Progress on one will generate progress on the other.”

Thank you very much.