

**As Prepared**



**THE 2017 MOSCOW NONPROLIFERATION CONFERENCE:  
Nuclear Energy, Disarmament, and Non-proliferation**

**PLENARY SESSION I: Prospects and Challenges of the 2020 NPT Review  
Cycle**

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Ambassador Van Der Kwast  
Ambassador Laggner  
Ambassador Berdennikov  
Dr Khlopkov  
Excellencies, ladies and gentlemen

My sincerest thanks to the Center for Energy and Security Studies and the Russian Federation Ministry of Foreign Affairs for inviting me to participate today. This conference has consistently proven itself as a venue for valuable open and frank debates that take forward our shared commitment to a world free of nuclear weapons.

I hope today's session will be no different because we are discussing what I consider to be one of the most important pillars of international peace and security – the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons, the NPT.

There is no doubt that the Treaty faces serious challenges. However, I am confident that by focusing on what unites, not what divides, and through a commitment to dialogue, bridge-building and practical steps, we can all celebrate the Treaty's fiftieth anniversary in 2020. There is one important common ground for virtually all States parties of the NPT. You all believe that NPT must remain solid and strong, and that any weakening of the NPT will have grave consequences for the security of all of you.

Going forward to 2020 together, let me touch on three broad issues which I think will be important.

The first issue I would like to touch on is about our approaches in the review cycle and level of ambition. Building the ground for success needs to start now. In my view, it is imperative that States parties keep their ambitions high about what can be achieved in 2020. To not do so will invite lowered expectations and commensurately lowered political will to achieve concrete outcomes.

The 2017 PrepCom was held in a positive environment. I hope that States parties will build on that spirit of compromise and flexibility and maintain it through to 2020 and beyond.

This is particularly important if States parties are to embark on a process leading to the establishment of a Middle East zone free of nuclear weapons and all other weapons of mass destruction. All States of the region agree on the necessity and objective of the zone. All involved parties should return to dialogue to find a way forward. The United Nations remains prepared to support any role agreed by the States of the region.

Likewise, I hope it will be recognised that the disarmament and non-proliferation regime is comprised of multilateral, plurilateral, bilateral and even unilateral agreements and instruments. The Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons is now a part of that regime – the cornerstone of which remains the NPT. I trust States parties will not allow diverging views to derail the review cycle.

The second issue is for all States parties to re-affirm the understanding and agreement that Disarmament and non-proliferation are two sides of the same coin and mutually

reinforcing. This mutual reinforcement, along with a commitment to the peaceful use of nuclear energy, forms the bargain enshrined in the core of the NPT. And it is as critical to international peace and security as ever. As the Secretary-General said in his address to the General Assembly, “Today global anxieties about nuclear weapons are at the highest level since the end of the Cold War.”

The crisis in North East Asia must serve as a sharp reminder to remain vigilant against evolving proliferation challenges, for unity in the face of challenges to the Treaty’s principles, and for the complete implementation of all the NPT’s provisions.

Non-proliferation challenges are not static and so neither can the treaty be. The non-proliferation regime designed around the NPT is robust. But it was also developed in the 1960s as a stop-gap on the way to the elimination of nuclear weapons. It should be constantly tended to prevent exploitation of potential lacuna and to keep pace with evolving conditions.

A commitment to multilateral nuclear disarmament and the pursuit of a world free of nuclear weapons has always been part of the NPT’s bedrock. The growing gap between States parties over the pace and scale of disarmament fundamentally impedes their ability to pursue this goal and undermines the Treaty.

This leads me to the third and last issue I would like to touch on today, which is what practical steps can be taken.

If there is to be a successful outcome in 2020, there needs to be demonstrative progress in nuclear disarmament. Leadership by the nuclear-weapon States is a prerequisite. The recent meeting between the NWS in New York was a positive signal and I encourage them to continue engaging at the highest possible level to find commonality and achievable outcomes.

However, I am concerned that at the moment, there are no envisaged reductions in nuclear arsenals of any kind. Worryingly, it is also possible that the hard won arms control gains of the Cold War could be undone. Leadership by the Russian Federation and the United States to reverse this trend would immediately help shore up the NPT and, in turn, peace and security.

I urge these two States, as the possessors of some ninety percent of global nuclear weapons, to commence the necessary discussion on how to approach further reductions and other arms control issues.

The 64-point Action Plan agreed in 2010 still contains much common ground among all States parties. The commitments are there in black and white and already agreed upon, it is their implementation that has slowed dramatically. I might be useful to take stock of the state of implementation of the Action Plan with a specific purpose of identifying what might be part of a 2020 outcome.

In the near-term, there is an opportunity to implement some of the risk reduction, transparency and confidence-building measures contained in the action plan. For example, full implementation of the measures related to reporting on nuclear disarmament undertakings would help to create a positive climate among States parties.

Of course, these measures are no substitute for irreversible reductions in weapons, but they will certainly be good contributions towards our joint objectives. Likewise, progress on other priority agenda items in the area of nuclear disarmament, such as the early entry-into-force of CTBT or commencement of negotiations on FMCT, will also contribute to creating a positive momentum for a successful 2020 Review Conference.

Excellencies, ladies and gentlemen,

Ultimately, the continued health of the regime established by the NPT requires States parties to create and sustain the political will needed to ensure the NPT's continued vitality, credibility, and capability to deal with the contemporary threats and challenges posed by nuclear weapons.

As the Secretary-General said, "The only world that is safe from the use of nuclear weapons is a world that is completely free of the nuclear weapons themselves." The NPT remains an essential vehicle for the attainment of that goal.

The United Nations will continue to work closely with you in the process.

Thank you.