



**Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons: Third
Preparatory Committee Session of the 2020 Review Cycle**

**Side event: “Chairs’ recommendations for the 2019 PrepCom and
2020 RevCon”**

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Ambassador van Deelen,
Ambassador Bugajski,
Excellencies,
Ladies and Gentlemen,

It is my great pleasure to speak at today's side event. Allow me to begin by commending the Governments of the Netherlands and Poland, not only for chairing the first two sessions of the Preparatory Committee for the 2020 NPT Review Conference, but for their innovative and fruitful cooperation.

As we look towards the 2020 Review Conference and beyond, I think it would be useful to reflect on where we have come from, namely the grand bargain and the strengthened review process that emerged from the indefinite extension of the NPT in 1995.

Observers have noted that, by the time of its indefinite extension in 1995 the NPT had morphed into the vessel for a series of bargains, including the one between the nuclear-weapon States and the non-nuclear weapon States regarding disarmament and non-proliferation. It is worth remembering that the NPT was never envisioned as a way to preserve the present state of affairs indefinitely, but as a partial measure on the road to general and complete disarmament.

The strengthened review process adopted in 1995 represented a profound change. The Preparatory Committee sessions were transformed from static administrative bodies to venues for substantive debate and for assessing States parties' progress towards their commitments under the Treaty. This strengthened review process resulted in consensus agreement on ambitious and comprehensive outcome documents in 2000 and 2010.

Since then, forward progress has stalled. In some areas, previous achievements and agreements have begun to unravel. Common viewpoints and points of convergence are increasingly rare. The reasons for this are largely external to the review process itself. They can be found in the worsening international security environment and the apparent return to great power competition, as well as other factors such as the emergence of what is essentially the beginnings of a technological military revolution.

However, States are not simply idle bystanders to circumstance – they are also the agents of this environment and, therefore, endowed with the agency to change it for the better.

The NPT stands as a case study of how international cooperation during times of stress and disagreement can help reduce tensions and build confidence.

The international security climate will not get better on its own. States need to work for this outcome. Disarmament, arms control and non-proliferation initiatives and instruments, in conjunction with other peace and confidence-building and conflict resolution efforts, can help.

It starts with efforts to rebuild habits of cooperation, improved transparency and accountability, and reaffirmations of support for existing commitments and obligations.

This is something to remember in the lead up to 2020.

For these reasons, it becomes all the more important to try innovative ideas to drive forward our current discussions. The Chairs of the sessions of the Preparatory Committee have a unique insight into the structure of the review process, the positions of States Parties, the possibilities for consensus and the challenges on the road to 2020. For these reasons, previous Review Conferences have called on the chairs of the Preparatory Committee to work closely together.

I commend the Netherlands and Poland for doing just that and for their efforts to channel this insight for the benefit of their successors and the review process as a whole. I would also like to recognize Malaysia for its close cooperation with the preceding chairs, its stewardship of the third session, and for taking forward the preparations for 2020. The degree of cooperation between the chairs of the three sessions of the Preparatory Committee this cycle is a great example of the sort of innovation that can make the review process more effective.

It is my hope that States Parties will be similarly prepared to consider new proposals to make the present review cycle a success and also to properly celebrate its approaching milestone. One such proposal that has been raised is the holding of a ministerial segment and the adoption of a ministerial declaration at the beginning of the 2020 Review Conference. This could serve as a means to commemorate the 50th anniversary of the entry-into-force of the Treaty and the 25th anniversary of its indefinite extension. It would also help to kick off proceedings of the important substantive discussions in a hopeful and unifying way.

25 years after its inception, we owe it to ourselves to ask whether the review structure as it stands now is still fit for purpose or whether it could be further improved to better suit the

needs of States Parties. I am encouraged by proposals to revisit the structure of the quinquennial review cycle with a view to making it more output-oriented.

In closing, let me reiterate that, as the secretariat for the Preparatory Committee and the Review Conference, my office has been proud to support the work of the Netherlands, Poland and now Malaysia as they seek to steer the review process towards a successful conclusion. We look forward to continuing to support the presiding officers and their bureau as we move towards 2020.

I thank you.