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STATEMENT  
BY H.E. AMBASSADOR LE LUONG MINH,  
PERMANENT REPRESENTATIVE OF VIET NAM TO THE UNITED  
NATIONS, HEAD OF THE DELEGATION OF VIET NAM  
AT THE GENERAL DEBATE OF THE 2005 REVIEW  
CONFERENCE OF THE STATE PARTIES TO THE TREATY ON THE  
NON-PROLIFERATION OF NUCLEAR WEAPONS

**New York**  
Thursday, **05 May 2005**

*Please check against delivery!*

Mr. President,

Let me, on behalf of the Delegation of Viet Nam, congratulate you on your election to the Presidency of this important 2005 Review Conference of the Parties to the NPT. My equally warm congratulations go to the other members of the Bureau. I am confident that with your rich experience and vast knowledge in the field, you will be able to steer our Conference through a difficult time toward a satisfactory outcome.

Mr. President,

The Delegation of Viet Nam fully associates itself with the Statement made by the Minister of Foreign Affairs of Malaysia, His Excellency Hamid Syed Albar, on behalf of the Group of Non-Aligned State Parties to the NPT.

Mr. President,

The NPT was concluded on the basis of the balance of interests between the states which have nuclear weapons and those which do not have and commit not to acquire them. The three pillars on which the Treaty rests, namely non-proliferation, nuclear disarmament and peaceful uses of nuclear energy are equally essential. As we are starting the substantive work of the Conference, my Delegation deems it necessary to reiterate the fundamental view that for the NPT to remain firm, that balance of interests between States Parties need to be maintained and all those three pillars need to be strengthened. Any continued absence of an equal treatment of vertical and horizontal aspects of non-proliferation will only push us further away from a world free from nuclear weapons, which is the final objective of the Treaty. All States Parties are obliged to live up to their commitments to implement their obligations under the Treaty, the decisions and resolutions of the 1995 Review and Extension Conference and the provisions contained in the Final Document of the 2000 Review Conference.

Mr. President,

A thorough review would tell us that the situation concerning the implementation of the Treaty in many aspects is not a rosy one. Implementation has been uneven. While the non-proliferation regime has been strictly observed by the overwhelming majority of more than 180 non-nuclear-weapon States, disarmament has not enjoyed the level of emphasis placed in an unbalanced manner by nuclear-weapon States on non-proliferation, thus has witnessed more negative than positive developments. Article VI of the NPT clearly stipulates that the nuclear-weapon States have the obligation to carry out negotiations in good faith with a view to reducing and finally eliminating nuclear weapons. The decision in 1995 to extend the Treaty indefinitely was based on the commitment by the nuclear-weapon States to fulfil their obligation under this Article and in fact, at the 2000 Review Conference, the nuclear-weapon States did give an unequivocal undertaking that they would do so. With limited progress we see in the reduction in the number of deployed nuclear weapons, the rest of the disarmament picture is bleak. Thousands of nuclear weapons still exist, many on alert status, this in the context of the increasing danger of nuclear weapons falling into the hands of the terrorists. Negotiations on a fissile materials cut-off treaty are yet to resume. The Conference on Disarmament remains idle. And, while the International Court of Justice has passed a verdict on the legality of the threats of use of nuclear weapons, we are alarmed by the emergence of new security doctrines giving even a broader role to nuclear weapons. This situation is jeopardizing the authority and the relevance of the NPT. It is urgent for our Conference to arrive at measures to overcome the present deadlock. The Conference on Disarmament must be allowed to do its work and we join the call for an international conference on nuclear disarmament.

Mr. President,

Having voluntarily opted not to acquire nuclear weapons, the non-nuclear-weapon States have the legitimate right to receive security assurances from nuclear-weapon States. Regrettably, while such assurances are essential to promote the confidence of the non-nuclear-weapon States, and thus strengthen the NPT, conditions are being attached to such assurances. Pending the total elimination of nuclear weapons, early conclusion of a universal, unconditional and legally binding instrument on security assurances to non-nuclear-weapon States is an earnest demand, which our Conference should pay adequate attention.

Mr President

The Conference on Nuclear-Weapon-Free Zones which took place just last week in Mexico reaffirmed the conviction in nuclear-weapon-free zones as an important nuclear disarmament measure. Since the conclusion of the Extension Conference, the 1995 Bangkok Treaty and the 1996 Palindaba Treaty creating nuclear-weapon-free zones in Southeast Asia and Africa respectively have been concluded. The declaration of Mongolia's nuclear-weapon-free status and the commitments made at Tashkent in February 2005 by the five Central Asian States to establish a nuclear-weapon-free zone in Central Asia should also be mentioned. Altogether, today over 100 states have signed nuclear-weapon-free zone treaties. This is an encouraging situation. We must continue efforts to implement the resolution adopted by the 1995 NPT Review Conference on making the Middle East a zone free of nuclear weapons. One of the most important factors determining the effectiveness of the treaties establishing such nuclear-weapon-free zones is the signing by the nuclear-weapon States of their protocols. We continue to call upon them to do so. The Treaty on the Southeast Asia Nuclear-Weapon-Free Zone symbolizes the attempts of the countries of the Southeast Asian region to advance the cause of peace and stability in the region and nuclear non-proliferation and disarmament as a whole. As a state party to the Treaty, we welcome China's readiness to sign its Protocol and reiterate our wish to see all the five nuclear-weapon States sign it together.

Mr. President,

The NPT in its Article IV and the Statute of the IAEA do provide for the right of State Parties for technical co-operation among themselves and for technical assistance to States Parties which are developing countries. As I mentioned above, peaceful uses of nuclear energy is one of the three important pillars of the NPT, which deserves equal treatment. We share the concerns over the tendency to apply undue restrictions on exports of material, equipments and technology for peaceful purposes to developing countries and call for their removal. While supporting and commending the IAEA's work in ensuring compliance, we believe there should be and can be more balance in its resources for safeguards and those for technical assistance.

Mr President

The NPT has played a vital role in preventing proliferation of nuclear weapons but its future is being at stake. With the developments of the past years, we find ourselves at a critical juncture, where we have to decide whether to move forward to regain the relevance of the NPT or to let the confidence of States Parties in the Treaty continue to erode. We need a responsible, balanced and fair approach to bring us out of the present situation. The NPT can only remain firm if all its three pillars are strengthened. Total elimination of nuclear weapons and a nuclear-weapon-free world must be the objectives guiding our actions in and out of this Conference. I can assure you, Mr. President, that as a non-nuclear-weapon State, a party to the NPT, a party to the Treaty on the Southeast Asia Nuclear-Weapon-Free Zone, one of the initial signatories of the CTBT and a member of the Conference on Disarmament, proceeding from its foreign policy of peace, Viet Nam will continue to be guided by such noble objectives. In your efforts to ensure success of the Conference, you can count on the fullest co-operation of my Delegation.

I thank you all for your attention!