

Madam President
Ladies and Gentlemen

In today's world, promoting peace and security is a key priority for Switzerland. In various regions across the globe, we are undertaking initiatives to defuse crises and reduce the risks of war by facilitating dialogue and building bridges to overcome differences.

It is in this spirit that we seek to make meaningful contributions to the strengthening of the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT) and to achieving its objectives. The NPT is an irreplaceable cornerstone of international security and a major pillar of Switzerland's efforts to help build a better and more secure world.

Global power shifts, current geopolitical tensions, and regional instabilities may complicate the disarmament and non-proliferation process. Yet, such challenges must not be an excuse for inaction. On the contrary, the many uncertainties that we are facing and the current strain on the nuclear regime make substantial progress on disarmament and non-proliferation all the more important.

We call on all sides to seize the opportunity of this Review Conference to genuinely search for common ground, help achieve a consensus outcome, and reinvigorate the NPT; new impetus can only come about if all parties engage in constructive dialogue.

The outcome document should take our dialogue forward: by reaffirming past agreements, and by charting a way forward to make real progress in all three pillars: non-proliferation – peaceful use – and

above all: nuclear disarmament. The document should confirm that the Action Plan adopted five years ago remains our road map. We propose to define ambitious but realistic "benchmarks" to accelerate the implementation of all actions contained in the Action Plan.

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Switzerland has been actively engaged in efforts to deepen our understanding of the catastrophic humanitarian consequences of the use of nuclear weapons. A nuclear detonation, whether by accident, miscalculation or design, would constitute a humanitarian disaster of such magnitude that we would have no response to it.

The catastrophic consequences of a nuclear weapon detonation are the primary reason why Switzerland is determined to move resolutely towards a world without nuclear weapons. These humanitarian considerations are a powerful driver not only for nuclear disarmament but also for nuclear non-proliferation and nuclear security.

The overarching objective is clear: a world without nuclear weapons. It is a primary responsibility of authorities to protect their population from such catastrophes. We have to do everything possible to ensure that such weapons are never used again, under any circumstances.

Concerning nuclear disarmament, nuclear-weapon states have made significant reductions in their nuclear stockpiles, dismantled warheads, decommissioned nuclear facilities, or made progress on verification procedures and other elements essential for a world free of nuclear weapons.

This Review Conference should underline the need to continue these efforts and go further. There is a compelling need for results-oriented, inclusive nuclear disarmament negotiations. We have to redouble efforts to agree on goals for quantitative reductions.

We also must address the legal gaps in the nuclear regime. The Comprehensive Nuclear Test-Ban-Treaty has still not entered into force. Negotiations on a treaty prohibiting the production of fissile material have yet to commence. There is a need for thorough and inclusive conceptual discussions about possible additional instruments to advance multilateral nuclear disarmament.

We have to be both ambitious and pragmatic. Eliminating nuclear weapons requires engaging with the nuclear-armed states; it cannot be accomplished without them. We must collectively shape a security environment conducive to achieving a world without nuclear weapons, in particular by strengthening the role of the UN.

The total elimination of nuclear weapons cannot be achieved overnight: An initial urgent step is to focus on the progressive reduction of risks related to nuclear weapons. Nuclear-armed states should reduce the operational readiness of their weapons and lengthen decision times. Together with Sweden, New Zealand, and "Global Zero", Switzerland will host a Side Event later this week to present a study with specific de-alerting suggestions.

With regard to doctrines, Switzerland proposes that nuclear-armed states should limit the role of nuclear weapons to the sole purpose of deterring the use of nuclear weapons by other States.

Recent developments demonstrate how important it is that States possessing such weapons refrain from any nuclear threat for political purposes. We will never be able to avoid all crises; but we can, through confidence-building measures, strengthen communication channels, in particular between armed forces, to reduce the risks of an unintended nuclear war.

With regard to non-proliferation, Switzerland welcomes the Joint Statement of Lausanne on Iran's nuclear programme. We encourage the parties to conclude a comprehensive long-term settlement which would constitute a real success for non-proliferation. And we stand ready to provide our good services for further negotiations.

Switzerland will continue to support diplomatic efforts to resolve proliferation challenges. We urge the DPRK to return to the NPT. And we encourage the parties involved in the Six-Party Talks to re-launch the negotiation process.

We welcome the steady strengthening of the safeguards system in recent years. Continued outreach will be necessary to promote the adoption of Additional Protocols to the IAEA Comprehensive Safeguards Agreements.

We should also continue to raise awareness of nuclear security issues. The Nuclear Security Summits and the IAEA Ministerial Conference have highlighted the need to secure all nuclear materials used for civilian and military purposes. The persistent threat of terrorism and the vulnerabilities of cyberspace point to growing challenges in this field.

The Fukushima nuclear accident demonstrated the need for better international nuclear safety measures to prevent future catastrophes. The Vienna Declaration on strengthening the Convention on Nuclear Safety (CNS) must be universalized and implemented.

This Review Conference should also support concrete efforts to convene a conference on establishing a Middle-East Weapons of Mass Destruction Free Zone. The consultations convened by the Facilitator in Switzerland have proved that the participation of all relevant states is possible. Switzerland has resolutely supported the work of the Facilitator and we invite, once again, all parties to approach this issue in a spirit of cooperation.

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This kind of review conference should also prompt us to consider our responsibility towards our peoples. No matter how complicated things are, this responsibility is clear: we have to work together, overcome progressively our differences, and strengthen global security. Switzerland, my country, is determined to facilitate this indispensable dialogue and to play its role as bridge builder.