

Statement by the United States
Thematic Discussion on Nuclear Weapons
UNFC October 2022
(5 Minutes)

Thank you, Chair,

Earlier this year, the United States completed a review of U.S. nuclear weapons policies and posture. While the release of the unclassified report is forthcoming, President Biden outlined a number of priorities that shape this nuclear policy, including but not limited to:

- A declaratory policy that reflects a sensible and stabilizing approach to deterring a range of attacks. The policy states that as long as nuclear weapons exist, the fundamental role of U.S. nuclear weapons is to deter nuclear attack on the United States, our Allies, and partners.
- The policy prioritizes strategic stability, the avoidance of costly arms races, and the pursuit of risk reduction and arms control arrangements where possible;
- And importantly, the policy reflects that the U.S. will continue to take steps to reduce the role of nuclear weapons, while ensuring

the U.S. nuclear deterrent remains safe, secure, and effective and that U.S. extended deterrence commitments to our allies remain ironclad and credible;

In January of this year, in a step toward collectively reducing the salience of nuclear weapons, the United States, together with the other NPT nuclear-weapon States released a Joint Statement affirming that a nuclear war cannot be won and must never be fought, and that nuclear weapons should serve defensive purposes, deter aggression, and prevent war. Unfortunately, Russia's nuclear saber-rattling and its brutal war on Ukraine casts doubt on its commitment to this statement.

The United States, however, remains committed to pursuing risk reduction measures and arms control arrangements that reduce the risk of nuclear war and avert destabilizing arms races. The United States is committed to the full, effective implementation of New START, including the resumption of onsite inspections, which were paused in March 2020 due to the COVID pandemic. And as President Biden stated at the NPT Review Conference in August, the United States "is ready to expeditiously negotiate a new arms control framework to replace New START when it expires in 2026." But such negotiation requires a willing partner operating in good faith.

Mr. Chair, Russia's brutal and unprovoked aggression against Ukraine has shattered peace in Europe and constitutes an attack on the fundamental tenets of the international order. Russia's attack has led to the deterioration of the global security environment. Simultaneously, the PRC is rapidly building a larger, more diverse nuclear arsenal but it remains reluctant to substantively engage in risk reduction measures or transparency. Last year alone, China launched more ballistic missiles than the rest of the world combined, and it dangerously deviating from the behavior of responsible nuclear powers by generally rejecting the practice of notifying these launches to others despite its pursuit of a launch-on-warning posture.

The Hague Code of Conduct against Ballistic Missile Proliferation (HCOOC)'s is a unique multilateral confidence building and transparency instrument that contributes to our collective security. But Beijing resists joining HCOOC, which would promote stability and reduce the risks of miscalculation. Instead, China has limited its missile launch notification cooperation to Russia, all while Moscow launches indiscriminate missile attacks on civilians in Ukraine. This is not the behavior of a responsible nuclear power and we call on China and Russia to pursue measures that reduce nuclear risks.

Chair,

In order to further enhance collective security and stability, the United States has joined the other P5 states, with the noted exception of the PRC, in declaring and adhering to a moratorium on the production of fissile material for nuclear weapons in order to cap potential growth in nuclear stockpiles. In addition, the United States continues to support the immediate commencement of negotiations on a Fissile Material Cut-off Treaty (FMCT) on the basis of consensus and with the participation of all key states.

Another crucial step toward nuclear disarmament is maintaining the international norm against nuclear explosive testing. The United States supports the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty (CTBT) and is committed to working to achieve its entry into force, recognizing the significant challenges that lie ahead in reaching this goal. In line with the goals of the CTBT, the United States continues to observe its zero-yield nuclear explosive testing moratorium and calls on all states possessing nuclear weapons to declare or maintain such a moratorium.

The United States has also engaged in a number of cooperative initiatives designed to lay the groundwork for future nuclear disarmament. The International Partnership for Nuclear Disarmament Verification (IPNDV) and the “Creating an Environment for Nuclear

Disarmament” (CEND) initiative are two prime examples that bring together diverse groups of states with and without nuclear weapons to work collaboratively on issues vital to nuclear disarmament and nonproliferation.

Finally, Chair,

In this difficult global security environment, we must increase the full, equal, and meaningful participation of women at all levels of decision-making processes, including those related to conflict, crisis, and security. Such increased participation leads to better and more sustainable outcomes—not only for women, but for entire communities and countries.

Thank you, Chair.