

# AUSTRIA



PERMANENT MISSION OF AUSTRIA  
TO THE UNITED NATIONS

## **Tenth Review Conference of the Parties to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT)**

### **Closing remarks by the Republic of Austria**

Delivered by

Ambassador Alexander Kmentt

Director for Disarmament, Arms Control and Non-Proliferation  
Austrian Federal Ministry for Europe and International Affairs

New York, 26 August 2022

***Check against delivery***

Mr. President,

My delegation joins others in thanking you, the bureau, the facilitators and the secretariat for your tireless work.

We regret that this Review Conference yet again was not able to end with the adoption of a substantive Final Document. Our next opportunity will be in 2026(7) which will make it more than 15 years without a substantive agreement in this treaty framework.

The outcome document that was before us was, of course, very disappointing, yet not surprising.

We came to this conference ready to strengthen the credibility and implementation of an NPT that is under immense pressure. Actions by the Russian Federation, a nuclear weapon state and depository of the NpT in blatant violation of international law have profoundly damaged the NPT. Beyond that other geopolitical tensions are also impacting and paralyzing practically all issues that we discussed during the past four weeks.

We also see a dramatic trust and confidence deficit among some NWS. There are mutual accusations about who is responsible for the deterioration of international security and for the dangerous global situation we find ourselves in. There is little agreement on any issue. Except on one they can agree: no forward movement on nuclear disarmament. This damages the NPT, puts the norm against the proliferation of nuclear weapons under duress and reinforces the credibility deficit of this treaty on the implementation of Art. 6.

Mr. President,

We all understand the challenging security environment. Yet there is a fundamental disagreement among the membership on the question of whether nuclear weapons provide security or whether they endanger all of our security.

Reliance on nuclear deterrence at the end of the day means the readiness to inflict global catastrophic consequences also on states and populations that have little to do with and are not responsible for the geopolitical tensions. This is unacceptable.

If we take the concept of undiminished and increased security for all seriously, we cannot just look at the security perceptions of some, especially when they come at the expense of the security needs of others. We need to look at the actual impact – the risks and consequences – for all countries. This discussion is lacking in this forum.

Many nuclear weapon free states, including my delegation, have forcefully made the argument for urgent progress on nuclear disarmament. This is based on the fact-based

understanding of the global humanitarian impact of nuclear weapons, let alone a nuclear war and the high - and rising - risks that are imposed on all states - as just again pointed out by nearly 150 states this week. And, yes, there is clear new evidence and science to back this up.

Mr. President,

It says a lot about the state of affairs in our treaty if the only chance to achieve an outcome document is when no delegation wishes to take the blame for breaking consensus. We are lacking a positive agenda and the sufficient political will and shared vision of what the successful implementation of the NPT means.

The last 4 weeks have shown us again how the NPT primarily cements the status quo or even backtracks. No matter the existing obligations and commitments, the Treaty does little in real life to move us forward on nuclear disarmament. What we need - as the distinguished representative of Mexico just highlighted on behalf of TPNW supporting states - is fresh momentum.

In this sense, these 4 weeks have been a validation of and promotion for the TPNW, its arguments and its rationale. The TPNW is clear about the catastrophic humanitarian consequences and the unacceptable risks. The TPNW states unequivocally condemn any and all nuclear threats, whether they be explicit or implicit and irrespective of the circumstances. We are inclusive of civil society and survivors and gender, we take the disproportionate effect of ionizing radiation on women and girls seriously. We need more of this in the NPT.

We and others tried hard to achieve progress in the NPT, but we see once again how little is possible. The status quo is simply not an option. We cannot prepare for nuclear catastrophe. What we cannot prepare for we must prevent. We cannot afford to wait.

We therefore join the many others to call on all states who want to achieve actual progress on Art. VI of the NPT to join the TPNW.

We hope that the deeply unsatisfactory result of this review conference will serve as a wake-up call. Austria will not tire in our work to implement the NPT and the TPNW. We have no other choice given the existential dangers and risks of nuclear weapons.

Thank you