

Check against delivery!

Statement

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Tenth Review Conference of the Parties to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons

General Debate

2 August 2022

Mr. President,

Let me start by congratulating you on assuming the Presidency of the the Tenth Review Conference of the Parties to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT). You can count on Bulgaria's full support in your efforts to steer us to a successful outcome.

Bulgaria aligns itself with the statement delivered by the European Union. I would like to highlight several elements of particular importance to my country.

We are meeting under extremely challenging security environment. The illegal, unjustified and unprovoked aggression of the Russian Federation against Ukraine has severe repercussions not only for Europe but for the world as a whole. The actions of the Russian Federation are not only in complete violation of international law and of the United Nations Charter, they have had direct impact on the NPT regime as well. The breach by the Russian Federation of the 1994 Budapest Memorandum has dire consequences on the negative security assurances that are key to the viability of the NPT.

Moreover, Russia's irresponsible military actions not only threaten the safety and security of the nuclear power plants on Ukraine's territory, they put in danger the lives of millions of people in Europe, thus undermining the core principles of the peaceful use of nuclear energy enshrined in the NPT.

We call on the Russian Federation to stop this illegal war, to abide by its international commitments and to immediately, completely and unconditionally withdraw all of its military forces from the territory of Ukraine within its internationally recognized borders.

Against that backdrop, it is more important than ever to reaffirm the validity and the relevance of the NPT as the cornerstone of the global nuclear non-proliferation regime, as an essential

foundation for the pursuit of nuclear disarmament, and as a framework for the peaceful use of nuclear energy. Few treaties have contributed so substantively to making this world a safer place.

Now, more than ever, the Parties to the NPT must seize the opportunity to defend and uphold the NPT by renewing their commitments to the full and effective implementation of the Treaty, to further reinforce its regime and to promote its universalization in order to address the current challenges in disarmament and nuclear non-proliferation and to maintain the global peace and security.

Mr. President,

Bulgaria is fully committed to the achievement of a world free of nuclear weapons. We are convinced that it can be attained only within the NPT framework, namely its Art. VI, and through a progressive and comprehensive approach that takes into account security considerations. Effective measures towards nuclear disarmament can only be achieved with the active participation of the nuclear weapons states.

We believe that the entry into force and the universalization of Comprehensive Nuclear -Test -Ban Treaty (CTBT) are not only a political imperative but also a practical step towards nuclear disarmament. More than 25 years after its opening for signature, the efforts of the international community are still required for its entry into force. Bulgaria, being an Annex II state, is among those who have signed and ratified the Treaty. We call upon all States, particularly the remaining Annex II States, to sign and ratify the CTBT without further delay.

The Fissile Material Cut-off Treaty remains among our top priorities in the nuclear disarmament field. We share the view on the necessity for the immediate commencement of FMCT negotiations within the Conference on Disarmament, since this is the issue with highest maturity for negotiations and constitutes another building block in the construction of a world without nuclear weapons. Meanwhile, all states possessing nuclear weapons that have not yet done so, have to declare and maintain moratorium on the production of fissile material for nuclear weapons and other nuclear explosive devices.

Mr. President,

The current proliferation challenges also need to be urgently addressed. DPRK's nuclear and ballistic missile programmes continue to pose threat to the regional and global peace and security. We call on the DPRK to abandon all its nuclear and ballistic missile programmes in a complete, verifiable and irreversible manner and to return to compliance with the NPT as a non-nuclear weapon State and with the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) Comprehensive Safeguards Agreement, as well as to sign and ratify the CTBT without delay.

Bulgaria firmly supports all diplomatic efforts to preserve and restore full and effective implementation of the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action (JCPOA) as an important component of the global non-proliferation architecture that helps reduce regional and global security risks.

Mr. President,

As a country that has been working successfully in all aspects of the peaceful use of atomic energy for decades, we stress the key importance of the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) Safeguard mechanism for the NPT's implementation and call for the universalization of the IAEA

Additional Protocol. The Technical Cooperation Programme is the Agency's key mechanism for transferring technology, building capacity and for the improvement of nuclear safety and security in the peaceful use of nuclear science and technology and must continue to be fully supported by the Member States.

Mr. President,

Bulgaria is convinced that through building trust and through the engagement of all, we stand a chance to uphold the NPT and its three mutually reinforcing pillars. We trust that the constructive and realistic approach will prevail during the Review Conference and will lead to its successful outcome.

We simply cannot afford to fail!

Thank you!