

PUGWASH STATEMENT AT THE 2022 NPT REVIEW CONFERENCE

**Delivered by SERGIO DUARTE, President of Pugwash
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I am honored to speak here today on behalf of Pugwash Conferences on Science and World Affairs. Pugwash was founded 67 years ago to warn mankind of the perils that have arisen as a result of the development of weapons of mass destruction. Today these perils seem more acute than ever.

The present global situation is full of dangers, some signs of which could already be felt two years ago when this Tenth Conference of the NPT was to take place. Since the Cuban Missile Crisis of 1962 the risks have not been as high as they are now, but while that crisis lasted 13 days, the war in Ukraine, which is at the heart of our present dangerous situation, has been going on for about days, since February 24. And there is no sign that the war will end soon. What is urgent now is to find a workable solution, starting with a quick ceasefire.

The Review Conference is a fitting opportunity to recall the Preamble of the NPT, which starts by warning the international community about the devastation that would be visited upon all mankind by a nuclear war. No country can feel safe and secure unless all also feel secure.

All nations are committed, under the Charter of the United Nations, not to use or threaten to use force against the territorial integrity of any state. Today, the whole architecture of world security, of which the NPT is a vital part, is endangered. The current situation has serious negative implications both with regard to the role of nuclear weapons for world stability and also for the credibility and permanence of the regime established by the NPT.

The assumption that nuclear deterrence would prevent a war in Europe has proven to be false. A major conflict has broken out with the danger of escalation toward the possible use of nuclear weapons. On the other hand, countries that have forsaken the acquisition of nuclear capability and joined the NPT may have second thoughts. Other disquieting prospects are the possible placement of nuclear weapons in the territory of NATO members where there are no such weapons at present, as well as their deployment by Russia closer to NATO borders. The development of dual-purpose supersonic missiles and the use of cyber techniques and of artificial intelligence in war also raise alarm.

Under the NPT, the overwhelming majority of countries agreed not to exercise the option to develop nuclear weapons in exchange for the promise of negotiations in good faith on effective measures relating to cessation of the nuclear arms race at an early date and to nuclear disarmament. That basic bargain, which made the NPT possible has not yet been fulfilled. It is imperative to implement all provisions of the NPT. Nuclear states should avail themselves of the opportunity offered by this Review Conference to explain in detail how they intend to fulfill their treaty commitments, particularly with regard to Article VI.

The difficulties inherent in a world free of nuclear weapons should not discourage us. Given the current climate of exacerbated tensions and strife it may not be possible at this juncture to achieve decisive progress. There are, however, a number of actions that can be taken by this Conference.

A recommitment to the Purposes and Principles of the United Nations could be the starting point to strengthening both the non-proliferation regime and the resolve to eliminate nuclear weapons.

While nuclear weapons still exist, non-nuclear states are entitled to receive adequate security assurances. The protocols to the treaties that established the nuclear weapon free zones need to be reviewed with a view to their improvement.

It is important to overcome the differences over the Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons by establishing an open debate about how the two instruments can work together for the achievement of the common goal. At the recent First Meeting of States Parties to the TPNW some interesting suggestions were made, among which joint efforts to explore, develop and promote complementarity and synergies with the NPT.

This Review Conference might agree to adopt a unanimous Declaration reiterating support to the NPT and pledging to achieve its full implementation. The Declaration could also reflect the concern about the catastrophic humanitarian consequences of any use of nuclear weapons, along the line already agreed ten years ago at the 2010 Review Conference, and call upon all states never to use or threaten to use nuclear weapons. Nuclear states parties should commit to take all necessary measures to reduce risks and to diminish the role of such weapons in their defense doctrines. Other elements could be added, including disarmament education.