

**FIRST PREPARATORY COMMITTEE OF
2015 NPT REVIEW CONFERENCE
30 APRIL – 11 MAY 2012
VIENNA
STATEMENT BY SINGAPORE**

Introduction

1 The Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT) is the only regime in the world which addresses the three equally important issues of nuclear disarmament, nuclear non-proliferation and peaceful uses of nuclear energy (PUNE). It is often regarded as one of the most successful international treaties with its near universal membership. It has been assessed that the NPT has effectively stopped the uncontrollable spread of nuclear technology for military purposes.

2 The NPT, however, was conceived in a different era, in a different geopolitical and security context. Despite its successes, its relevance and effectiveness today are being questioned. Furthermore, discussions on the three pillars have, unfortunately, become politically divisive. There is tremendous distrust between the Nuclear Weapons States (NWS) and Non Nuclear Weapons States (NNWS). The rift seems impossible to bridge. I will briefly highlight key challenges in respect of the 3 pillars.

First Pillar: Nuclear Disarmament

3 Despite recent positive developments, such as the New START arrangement between the US and Russia, the political will to fully realise Article VI of the NPT remains weak. The NPT freezes a moment of history that has clearly long passed. There are now countries outside the NPT framework which possess nuclear weapons. India and Pakistan have acquired nuclear weapons and do not appear close to giving them up. Israel is widely believed to possess them. The DPRK withdrew from the NPT, ceased cooperation with the IAEA and maintains its nuclear weapons capability. There is increasing concern that Iran has an on-going nuclear weapons programme. In addition, there are indications that non-state actors are involved in the illicit transfer of nuclear materials, dual-use equipment and technology (such as the former AQ Khan network) or interested in gaining access to them (such as terrorists groups). We understand that the international security environment remains a challenge and complete nuclear

disarmament remains a very long term aspiration. However, we have to start somewhere. Small steps add up and help to build confidence. The international community needs to work together to convince all states that nuclear weapons reduce rather than increase their security. The possession of nuclear weapons does not enhance the prestige of the country concerned. The NWS must take the lead in this effort because the compact between them and the NNWS is at the core of the NPT and it will not endure indefinitely without at least some concrete progress on Article VI. We hope to hear from the NWS at this meeting about the progress which they have made since the 2010 NPT Review Conference and on proposals they may have for the future.

4 Once again we express our appreciation of Indonesia's prompt ratification of the Comprehensive Nuclear Test Ban Treaty (CTBT), less than 2 years after it had announced its decision to do so. We urge all NWS and other Annex 2 countries to follow Indonesia's lead.

5 We support the establishment of more nuclear weapons free zones. However, unless and until the basic structures and dynamics of international relations change in a fundamental way, we understand that all states will give security the foremost priority in their policies. Therefore, a pragmatic, and not a purist or ideological, approach to NWFZs must be encouraged so as to give parties or potential parties to such zones confidence that their vital security interests will not be compromised. This is the approach we have taken with respect to the Southeast Asia Nuclear Weapon Free Zone (or SEANWFZ Treaty), in giving States Parties discretion in respect of transits of foreign ships and aircraft. The upcoming Conference on the establishment of a Middle East zone free of nuclear weapons and all other weapons of mass destruction is an important event which we support. However, we cannot ignore the broader geopolitical context of the region. It is important to create conditions that make such a zone a realistic objective, taking into account the security interests of all states in the region.

Second Pillar: Nuclear Non-Proliferation

6 There remains serious concern over the proliferation of dual use equipment and technology for use as WMDs, both by state and non-state actors. A more robust global export control regime should be established to guard against illicit trafficking, while not hampering legitimate trade. This needs the cooperation of all countries. Otherwise, proliferators will just seek

out the weak spots, as is already happening. Singapore works closely with the international community in these efforts, through measures such as the Container Security Initiative (CSI), the Megaports Initiative, and the implementation of the UNSCR 1540. We participate actively in the Proliferation Security Initiative (PSI), the Global Initiative to Combat Nuclear Terrorism (GICNT) and the Nuclear Security Summits.

7 It is also essential to find ways to encourage the countries with nuclear weapons and nuclear weapons capability that are outside the NPT framework to abide by the same international rules and safeguards. Relevant countries should work towards addressing their perceived security concerns. Only then will countries such as the DPRK, India, Israel and Pakistan consider disarming. Only then will we be able to prevent other countries from using the same arguments to justify pursuing a nuclear weapons programme.

Third Pillar: Peaceful Uses of Nuclear Energy

8 The peaceful application of nuclear science and technology helps to elevate the living conditions of mankind, through cancer treatment, water resource management, pest eradication, nuclear power generation, just to name a few. The right to PUNE derives from Article IV of the NPT. Singapore strongly supports this right. However, there are no rights without responsibilities. The development of certain nuclear technology leads to capabilities and knowledge that could be used for a nuclear weapons programme, such as uranium enrichment and plutonium reprocessing. It will help build international confidence if all countries could promote transparency by establishing a genuine dialogue and cooperation with the IAEA; and by allowing the Agency to verify that all nuclear materials and activities in the country concerned are for peaceful uses.

Conclusion

9 The outcome of the 2010 NPT Review Conference is encouraging, particularly after the stalemate in 2005. We must not, however, be under any illusion that all is well. We must take a serious look at the root cause of the key problems facing us in each of the 3 pillars. Both the NWS and NNWS must engage in a sincere dialogue in order to bridge the widening gap between them. The NPT does not operate in a vacuum. Developments outside the framework also affect the relevance and effectiveness of the

regime. All NPT States Parties must refrain from taking action that undermine the credibility of the NPT (in particular, the provisions of Articles I, IV and VI); or the common objective of achieving Treaty universality.