

update

Statement
by the delegation of the Republic of Kazakhstan
at the general debate of the First session of the Preparatory Committee
for the 2017 Review Conference
to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons

Vienna, May 3, 2017

Mr. Chair,

1. First of all, I would like to congratulate you, ~~on behalf of the delegation of the Republic of Kazakhstan,~~ on your role as the Chair of the First Session of the Preparatory Committee for the 2020 NPT Review Conference. Let me assure you of our support and cooperation in the full implementation of your mandate.

2. It is difficult to overestimate the importance of the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons. The NPT, as one of the cornerstones of international peace and security, plays a crucial role in advancing nuclear disarmament, non-proliferation and peaceful use of nuclear energy.

It is crucial that the current PrepCom consolidates our collective efforts in the universalization of the NPT, elaborate an effective mechanism against the withdrawal of states from the Treaty and ensures unconditional implementation of all multilaterally negotiated and generally approved agreements, including the Final document of the 2010 Review Conference.

We have to admit that more effort and commitment is required from us in order to avoid any possible failure with respect to common obligations. In this context, this review process presents a unique opportunity to exchange views on a wide range of pressing issues and take concerted actions aimed at the full implementation and strengthening of the NPT.

3. The nuclear disarmament and non-proliferation are considered by Kazakhstan as the highest priority demanding immediate attention. These two issues are interdependent and mutually reinforcing. That is why we need to advance them concurrently through collective efforts and in the spirit of multilateralism.

On a global scale, nuclear disarmament still remains an aspiration rather than action as thousands of nuclear arsenals still remain. Kazakhstan calls upon nuclear powers that pledged to make sincere efforts to eliminate nuclear weapons, in accordance with Article VI of the NPT, to take practical measures in this regard.

4. Kazakhstan for decades has been playing an outstanding role in the global process of nuclear disarmament and maintaining the non-proliferation regime.

Strengthening of nuclear weapons non-proliferation regime and nuclear security will be among the main directions of Kazakhstan's work as a non-permanent member of the UN Security Council for the period of 2017-2018.

4. Kazakhstan believes that a voluntary moratorium on nuclear testing observed by the nuclear powers, though an important factor of nuclear security, cannot serve as an alternative to a legally-binding document such as the CTBT. And an early entry into force of this Treaty would be essential for effective implementation of the NPT.

As co-coordinators of the Article 14 process, Kazakhstan and Japan have been conducting consistent work to facilitate the speedy entry into force of the CTBT. Kazakhstan and Japan adopted a high-level joint statement in October 2015, and issued two other statements in 2016 at the Nuclear Security Summit in Washington and the Open-ended Working Group in Geneva. It is the first statement of the highest level ever made by the CTBT Article 14 Co-Coordinators.

Our hope is to encourage once again certain states, whose ratification is necessary for the entry into force of CTBT, to sign and ratify the Treaty as soon as possible.

5. The establishment of Nuclear-Weapon-Free Zones (NWFZ) is a step towards a safer world. It should be acknowledged more widely as one of the practical ways to achieve this objective. These kind of initiatives should be encouraged by providing unconditional assurances against the use or threat of use of nuclear weapons.

Although NWFZs now cover more than half of the world, most of the NSA protocols are still under negotiations or have not been ratified yet by some nuclear weapon ~~zones~~^{States} (NWS), including the Treaty on a Nuclear-Weapon-Free Zone in Central Asia. The Semipalatinsk Treaty is considered by Kazakhstan as an opportunity to foster peace and security in a very fragile region full of conflict potential and challenges as well as an opportunity for a more stable and secure future.

Among our current challenges remains convening the Conference on the establishment of a Middle East zone free of nuclear weapons and other weapons of mass destruction, as stipulated by the 2010 Action Plan. The weight of this Conference is dictated by its pivotal role in ensuring both regional and global security.

Yet we should keep in mind that the establishment of zones free from deadly weapons is not an end in itself and, given their geographical limitation, such assurances cannot be a substitute for universal and legally-binding agreements. It is an additional tool to prevent proliferation of nuclear weapons in the current international climate.

6. It would be appropriate for us to develop during the current review cycle our responses to new challenges faced by the NPT in the field of peaceful use of

nuclear energy. Increased attention should be paid to the possible emergence of new nuclear energy producing countries and growing nuclear energy consumption and the need to ensure an adequate level of nuclear safety. The development of nuclear energy must exclude any risk of proliferation of nuclear materials usage for military purposes.

From the first day when Kazakhstan renounced its nuclear status in 1991, we have ensured not to produce or acquire nuclear weapons or other nuclear explosive devices and accepted IAEA safeguards on all its nuclear materials and facilities. We always remain faithful to this commitment.

Given the contemporary "nuclear renaissance", Kazakhstan, as the world's biggest supplier of uranium products, stands ready to add to our common cause. Kazakhstan supported the ~~IAEA~~ initiative to establish the Low enriched uranium Bank (LEU Bank). After commissioning a new building for LEU Bank, which is expected in August this year, the bank will be launched.

7. Concluding my remarks, Mr. Chair, I stress our conviction that a nuclear free world can be achieved if there is enough political will from all states. Kazakhstan, on our part, stands ready to add to strengthening the NPT, which provides firm basis for total elimination of nuclear arsenals and prevention of the spread of WMD.

Finally I would like to announce the publication of the book called "Reflections on the Treaty on the non-proliferation of Nuclear Weapons" Review conferences and the future of the NPT by Jayantha Dhanapala and Tariq Rauf with the support of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Kazakhstan. We appreciate the Secretariat for their kind distribution of the book to the delegations at their desks.

Thank you.

