CZECH REPUBLIC

Statement by

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at

the Thematic Debate on Nuclear Disarmament of the First Committee of the 68th Session of the General Assembly of the United Nations

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Mr. Chairman,

Since I am taking the floor for the first time, allow me to express my delegation’s sincere congratulations to you on your election as the Chairman of the First Committee, as well as to the members of the bureau. I am confident that under your able leadership this year’s First Committee will be a successful session. You can be confident of our cooperation and support.

The Czech Republic is fully aligned with the statement delivered by the European Union. I would like to add the following remarks in our national capacity.

Mr. Chairman,

We agree that The Non-Proliferation Treaty is more important today than ever. It remains the cornerstone of the global nuclear non-proliferation regime as well as nuclear disarmament. We must preserve and strengthen its authority and integrity. We also call for its universality.

The 2010 NPT consensual Action Plan is a road map to be implemented by the step-by-step approach to meet its demands and should not be deviated from in any way. Its implementation is our collective responsibility and should be shared by all state parties.

The Czech Republic believes that the longstanding objective of the complete elimination of nuclear weapons may be achieved only if the non-proliferation regime meets all demands for its strengthening. The association between the two should not be based on a negative linkage, in which one cannot be advanced without the other’s progress, but the two must move forward together in a well balanced manner. In the 2009 Prague Agenda speech, an ambitious vision by President Obama was set out: a world without nuclear weapons. In recent years the Czech Republic has hosted international conferences where many topical issues of nuclear disarmament were debated in details.

The Czech Republic as a non-nuclear weapon state has always strongly advocated for the right to develop, research and use nuclear energy for peaceful purposes without discrimination. Therefore, we have been always fully committed to the responsible way of using it. The latest OSART mission composed of IAEA experts reviewed safety operations with excellent corporate practices at our two nuclear power plants and corporate safety performance of the CEZ, the largest Czech electricity company. This example should serve as a reminder that the right for peaceful uses should be fully and only exercised in a responsible way. It is fully unacceptable if some countries, while ignoring approved and recognized international standards, endanger stability in their regions and increase the risk of proliferation. The Czech Republic is convinced that such behaviour is one of the causes slowing down nuclear disarmament. That is why we believe that this objective is achievable only with an effective nuclear non-proliferation regime.

Like the vast majority of UN member states we also attach priority to the commencement and early conclusion of negotiations in the Conference on Disarmament on a legally-binding treaty banning the production of fissile material for nuclear weapons or other nuclear explosive devices. The need for the FMCT has been emphasized by multiple NPT Review Conferences, most recently at the 2nd Preparatory Committee of NPT in May this year. We understand that launching such negotiations is not feasible without consensus on adopting a Programme of Work of the CD. We also stress the need to accept new member states to the CD.
The Czech Republic, being the first European country ratifying the Comprehensive Nuclear Test-Ban-Treaty (CTBT), would like to reaffirm its support to the process leading to the entry into force of the CTBT, which will significantly strengthen the international security architecture based on the NPT. We fully support the efforts of the Provisional Technical Secretariat (PTS) to further develop the CTBT verification regime as a strong non-proliferation and confidence-building instrument.

We strongly believe that launching the Nuclear Security Summit process was a wise step in the right direction. In our view this forum contributes to maintaining effective security and preventing non-State actors from acquiring nuclear materials. It should be a priority of all state parties to arrange efficient measures for all nuclear materials or radioactive sources, being highly exploitable items, to be kept under appropriate control at all times. The Czech Republic is one of the states that have already removed the entire stock of highly enriched uranium from its territory and converted its research reactors to the use of low enriched uranium, which is one of the most important objectives agreed upon at the Nuclear Security Summit.

Mr. Chairman,

The Czech Republic attaches great importance to the development of internationally recognized nuclear weapon free zones, established on the basis of agreements among States in the regions concerned. In our view, nowhere is this more important than in the Middle East today. We are fully aware that the decision to organize the Conference on the establishment of a Zone free of nuclear weapons and all other weapons of mass destruction in the Middle East was a part of a larger compromise in order to reach a successful outcome of the NPT 2010 Review Conference. The postponement of the 2012 Conference naturally caused disappointment. We share the opinion that the Middle East issue deserves a more comprehensive solution including the elimination of all categories of weapons of mass destruction, and a peace settlement in the region. We only hope that the conference on the establishment of the zone will be convened as soon as possible and will further facilitate the Middle East Peace Process.

Thank you for your attention.