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STATEMENT BY H.E. MR. STEPHAN TAFROV, PERMANENT REPRESENTATIVE OF BULGARIA TO THE UNITED NATIONS

70TH SESSION OF THE UN GENERAL ASSEMBLY, FIRST COMMITTEE, THEMATIC DEBATE ON NUCLEAR WEAPONS, 20 OCTOBER 2015

Mr. Chair,

Since this is the first time my delegation takes the floor, I would like to congratulate you, as well as the other members of the Bureau, on the assumption of the chairmanship of this Committee. I would also like to commend the previous Chair, Ambassador Courtney Rattray of Jamaica, for his excellent stewardship. You can count on the full support of my delegation in your efforts to steer us to a successful end of our deliberations.

This year has been marked by many developments in the field of nuclear disarmament and non-proliferation. Let me start with the historic agreement reached by the E3/EU+3 and Iran on 14 July 2015. With the adoption of the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action (JCPOA) a new opportunity to boost regional stability and international security was created. We look forward to the implementation of the agreed provisions where the mission of the IAEA in verification and monitoring of Iran's nuclear related commitments has an indispensable role.

This year also marks the 45th anniversary of the entry into force of the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons. Despite the inability of States Parties to reach consensus on a final document during the 2015 Review Conference, the Treaty remains the cornerstone of the global non-proliferation regime and the framework for nuclear disarmament, non-proliferation and peaceful uses of nuclear energy.

Mr. Chair,

The continuous efforts to focus on the humanitarian impact of nuclear weapons are closely linked with the concerns about the consequences for the humanity from a nuclear weapon detonation or a terrorist attack involving fissile material. This is why it is important to spread the awareness of the humanitarian impact of nuclear weapons across the borders. At the same time, eliminating nuclear weapons could only be possible through substantive and constructive engagement with all those states which which are in possession of such weapons.
Advancing nuclear disarmament requires our joint efforts. A common understanding on the necessary steps can be built through an inclusive and comprehensive discussion only, with the substantive participation of the nuclear weapon states. All these steps that we need to embark on will strengthen the NPT regime, in line with the obligations under Art. VI, and will contribute towards achieving the Treaty’s ultimate goal - a world without nuclear weapons. We need to act in a sustainable, realistic and responsible manner. Creating conditions for a world without nuclear weapons requires that both humanitarian and security considerations are taken into account. In this regard, we align ourselves with the statement made by Australia on the issue of humanitarian consequences.

Bulgaria supports a constructive and realistic, gradual approach, based on practical and implementable measures, building-blocks that will strengthen the international disarmament and non-proliferation regime. Such practical steps could be: overcoming the impasse in the Conference on Disarmament, including through its enlargement; starting negotiations on a Fissile Material Cut-off Treaty (FMCT), bringing into force the Comprehensive Nuclear Test Ban Treaty.

In this regard, we welcome the report of the Group of Governmental Experts of FMCT, and hope that it will help advance prospects of the commencement of negotiations.

We remain convinced that the earliest possible entry into force of the CTBT is a crucial step for furthering the nuclear disarmament and non-proliferation regime. This has been reiterated by all participants at the Article XIV Conference on that took place less than a month ago here in New York.

Finally, Bulgaria trusts that common efforts driven by the political will of all UN members have the potential to bring us closer to the ultimate goal – a world free of nuclear weapons.

Thank you for your attention!