CZECH REPUBLIC

Statement by

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to the United Nations

at the Thematic Discussion on Nuclear Weapons

of the First Committee of the 70th Session

of the General Assembly of the United Nations

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Mr. Chairman,

Allow me first 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. You can be assured of our cooperation and support.

We express our enduring support to universal adherence to the Non-Proliferation Treaty and to full compliance with the obligations under the Treaty. Although we were rather disappointed with the Review Conference earlier this year, we are convinced that the NPT remains indispensable for our collective security and will continue to serve as a fundamental instrument for advancing nuclear disarmament and non-proliferation. The 2010 NPT consensual Action Plan includes a number of important tasks that are still to be completed. The validity of the Action Plan remains unchanged and unchallenged. Its implementation is our collective responsibility and should be honored by all States Parties.

While we regret that it was not possible to reach consensus on the NPT Review Conference final document, we strongly hope that work towards the establishment of a Middle East WMD-Free Zone will be resumed in a constructive, inclusive and consensus-based manner. It is necessary to identify opportunities for regional dialogue and encourage a solution that takes into consideration the legitimate interests of all states in the region. We appreciate the efforts of the Facilitator Laajava and those of his team in this regard.

We call upon those States that have not yet signed or ratified the CTBT to do so without delay. Bearing in mind the outcome of the last Article XIV Conference and the upcoming 20th anniversary of the Treaty’s opening for signature, we would like to reaffirm our support to the entry into force of the CTBT.

In parallel, we need to advance on our non-proliferation objectives, including strengthened IAEA safeguards. We welcome the historic agreement of 14 July between the E3 +3 and Iran on a Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action. Its full implementation, facilitated by the Additional Protocol to Iran's Safeguards Agreement, will provide the international community with the necessary assurances on the exclusively peaceful nature of Iran's nuclear program. It is also important that Iran cooperates fully with the Agency on the clarification of all outstanding issues, including a possible military dimension, as agreed in the Roadmap signed by the IAEA and Iran.

The Czech Republic has repeatedly condemned the nuclear tests conducted by the DPRK as well as its threat of another nuclear test. We urge the DPRK to abandon its nuclear weapons and ballistic missiles programs and return to the NPT and IAEA Safeguards at an
early date. We support the essential role for the IAEA in verifying the DPRK’s nuclear program.

The Czech Republic has been a steadfast supporter of the right to peaceful uses of nuclear energy. We have actively participated in and financially contributed to the Peaceful Uses Initiative under the auspices of the IAEA, which is a central institution in this field. We are convinced that responsible exercise of the right to peaceful use of nuclear energy can yield numerous societal benefits in non-energy nuclear applications, such as advancements in cancer therapy, diseases control, water treatment, providing safe food and securing nutrition, etc.

Like the vast majority of UN member states we also attach high 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. Our expert had actively participated in the Group of Governmental Experts and contributed to the adoption of a substantive consensus report. We are confident that the recommendations on all key treaty aspects presented to the UN Secretary General will make the future negotiators’ task much easier and we welcome that the GGE Chair was given the opportunity to present the outcome of the Group’s work to the delegates of this Committee.

Mr. Chairman,

In his 2009 Prague Agenda speech President Obama set out an ambitious vision of a world without nuclear weapons that was followed by signing of the New START Treaty in Prague in 2010. In the last five years Prague has established itself as a venue for taking stock of issues related to nuclear disarmament, non-proliferation, nuclear security and arms control. The 5th Prague Agenda Conference, which took place just last week with the participation of High Representative Kim Won-soo as one of the keynote speakers, explored, i.a. lessons learned and future prospects of the NPT, emerging nuclear powers, nuclear deterrence and humanitarian initiative. The Czech Republic will continue to host these conferences to provide room for discussion of topical issues of nuclear disarmament and non-proliferation.

I thank you for your attention.