CZECH REPUBLIC

Statement by

H.E. Mrs. Marie Chatardová
Permanent Representative of the Czech Republic to the United Nations

at the Thematic Discussion on Nuclear Weapons of the First Committee of the 72nd Session of the General Assembly of the United Nations

New York, 16 October 2017
Mr. Chairman,

We express our enduring support to the universal adherence to the Treaty on Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons and to full compliance with the obligations under the Treaty. The Czech Republic considers the NPT to be the cornerstone of international non-proliferation and disarmament architecture and the fundamental instrument for advancement in both fields. We must bring every effort to preserve and strengthen its authority and integrity. In this context, we consider the results of the First Preparatory Committee for the 2020 Review Conference as a very good first step towards its successful outcome.

The Czech Republic remains fully committed to support all three pillars of the NPT, including the right to peaceful uses of nuclear energy. This right must be exercised in a responsible manner and in accordance with all non-proliferation obligations and commitments, as recognized, inter alia, in international standards and safeguards agreements. It is essential to reaffirm the central role of the IAEA. In this context we would like to mention our active participation in and financial contributions to the Peaceful Uses Initiative under the auspices of the IAEA.

Mr. Chairman,

The Czech Republic was the first European country to ratify the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty (CTBT). We consider this Treaty to be one of the key instruments in the field of nuclear non-proliferation and disarmament. Therefore we would like to reaffirm our support to the process leading to the entry into force of the Treaty and call upon those States, that have not yet signed or ratified the CTBT, to do so as soon as possible. Our call is addressed in particular to the eight remaining States of Annex 2 to the CTBT. The value of the CTBT was clearly demonstrated in connection with the nuclear tests by the Democratic People’s Republic of Korea (DPRK).

The Czech Republic has repeatedly expressed its strong condemnation of the nuclear and ballistic missiles tests conducted by the DPRK. They represent a flagrant violation of the DPRK's obligations under the relevant UNSC resolutions, undermine the stability of the Korean Peninsula and of the entire region, and threaten international peace and security. The Czech Republic urges the DPRK to refrain from any such destabilizing activities and to immediately comply with all its international obligations. We also strongly urge the DPRK to abandon its nuclear weapons and ballistic missile programmes in a complete, verifiable and irreversible manner and to return to the NPT and IAEA Safeguards immediately.
The Czech Republic attaches 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. Given the disappointing continuing stalemate at the Conference on Disarmament, we supported the establishment of the high-level fissile material cut-off treaty expert preparatory group and we actively participated in the open-ended informal consultative meeting that took place last March here in New York.

Mr. Chairman,

Let me be quite clear - the Czech Republic remains fully committed to the objective of achieving and maintaining of a world without nuclear weapons. But any effective, sustainable disarmament must take into account the international security environment. That is why the Czech Republic belongs to the group of states that pursue the “Progressive Approach” of incremental, practical and effective steps to advance disarmament through parallel and simultaneous measures or “building blocks”. The Czech Republic is of the opinion that seeking to ban nuclear weapons through a treaty that will not engage any state actually possessing nuclear weapons will not be effective, will not reduce nuclear arsenals and will not enhance international peace and stability. Any effective, verifiable and irreversible disarmament must be inclusive, firmly rooted in the NPT and it should recognize that elimination of nuclear weapons is a long-term process which requires constructive dialogue with the nuclear weapons states.

Thank you, Mr. Chairman.