Statement by Turkey
First Committee
Thematic Debate on Nuclear Weapons
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Mr. Chairman,

Our ultimate objective is the elimination of nuclear and all types of weapons of mass destruction. Unfortunately we are not close to achieving this shared goal and need to exert further efforts in narrowing our differences and take joint responsibility in this direction.

Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty (NPT) is the centerpiece of the global non-proliferation and disarmament regime. And we are not repeating this each and every time, for the sake of repeating. At the 50th anniversary of the opening for signature of the Treaty, we should all be working towards strengthening the Treaty in all its three pillars, namely non-proliferation, peaceful uses and disarmament, as well as towards its universalization.

The 2020 NPT Review Conference and its preparatory process is an opportunity to protect and strengthen the Treaty. Bearing in mind the unfortunate conclusion of the 2015 NPT Review Conference without a consensus outcome, it is our common interest to work constructively for a successful Review Conference. We need to make progress on the 2010 NPT Action Plan and on the establishment of a zone in the Middle East free of all weapons of mass destruction and their delivery systems.

We maintain our firm position to not to support any action that undermines the integrity of the Treaty or creates an alternative to its full implementation. The NPT and the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) Safeguards regimes which underpin the NPT should be upheld. Efforts to reach the ultimate goal of a nuclear weapon free world should be realistic and include nuclear weapon states as well.

There are several steps that could be taken in the process ahead.

Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty should enter into force and be universalized. We welcome the recent ratification of the Treaty by Thailand and the signing by Tuvalu. We also welcome the moratoria regarding the nuclear tests. Nevertheless, moratoria are never substitute to a legally binding Treaty and we join others in urging the remaining States, in particular the Annex 2 States whose ratification is necessary, to become party to the Treaty. On this occasion, we would like to express our support to the CTBTO and its valuable work on the verification regime.

The commencement of negotiations in Geneva on the Fissile Material Cut-off Treaty (FMCT) will be another contribution to non-proliferation and disarmament efforts.

Nuclear disarmament verification and enhancing transparency will be no less important steps in this regard.
On the other hand, we welcome the establishment of five subsidiary bodies by the Conference on Disarmament (CD) and the adoption of four substantive reports resulting from their work. We hope this work will provide a solid basis for the future work of the CD.

We ask in particular the nuclear weapon states to remain engaged in active dialogue to preserve hard won existing treaties and ensure their full and verifiable implementation, which is crucial for global security.

IAEA has a central role in international nuclear cooperation. Its international safeguards system through which the Agency is able to provide credible assurances that States are honouring their international obligations under the NPT, is a vital component of the global non-proliferation regime and a confidence building mechanism in itself. The Agency now implements safeguards in 181 countries, helping to ensure that nuclear materials are not diverted from peaceful purposes. States in full compliance with their safeguards obligations should have unhindered access to civilian nuclear technology.

Mr. Chairman,

We need to protect the international non-proliferation regime and stand against any threat against it, first and foremost, any violation of international law as well as Security Council resolutions.

While we very much welcome inter-Korean talks and the dialogue between the US and DPRK, as well as the announcement of the DPRK on the suspension of nuclear tests and ballistic missile launches, we need to see concrete steps towards full and verifiable denuclearization of the Peninsula, which will contribute to regional and international security. Signing and ratifying the CTBT, as well as returning to NPT and IAEA Safeguards by DPRK will be important steps in this regard.

The Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action (JCPOA) is one of the foremost achievements of multilateral diplomacy. All reports of the IAEA confirm Iran’s compliance with the deal. The JCPOA should be preserved and implemented fully and without interruption, in a transparent manner and under the monitoring of the IAEA.

Mr. Chairman,

The topic of today’s discussion is obviously not one of the easiest. Nevertheless, recent history provides plenty of examples on how a common understanding can be achieved even at the height of tensions, when there is political will and a spirit of compromise.

Thank you.