EU Statement

By

Ms. Anne Kemppainen
Minister Counsellor
Head of Political Section for Non-proliferation and Disarmament
Delegation of the European Union in Geneva

First Committee
Thematic Discussion on Nuclear Weapons
United Nations General Assembly
74th Session

United Nations
New York
21 October 2019
Mr. Chair,

I have the honour to speak on behalf of the European Union.

The Candidate Countries Turkey, the Republic of North Macedonia*, Montenegro* and Albania*, as well as the Republic of Moldova align themselves with this statement.

The EU and its Member States are convinced that a multilateral approach to security, including arms control, disarmament and non-proliferation, provides the best way to maintain international peace and security.

As we approach the 2020 Review Conference, we expect all States to reaffirm their unequivocal support for the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty (NPT) as the cornerstone of the global nuclear non-proliferation regime, the essential foundation for the pursuit of nuclear disarmament in accordance with Article VI of the NPT and an important element in the further development of the applications of nuclear energy for peaceful purposes. We call on all States that have not yet done so to join this Treaty as non-nuclear weapon States, and all States Parties to implement the Treaty obligations and commitments agreed to during previous Review Conferences.

The NPT remains a key multilateral instrument reinforcing international peace, security and stability. It is a historic success and its full implementation is needed now more than ever. We recall that all States Parties have committed to pursuing policies that are fully compatible with the Treaty and the objective of achieving a world without nuclear weapons. All States Parties have also committed to applying the principles of irreversibility, verifiability and transparency in relation to the implementation of their Treaty obligations.

The EU strongly supports all three pillars of the NPT and will continue to promote comprehensive, balanced and full implementation of the 2010 Review Conference Action Plan. Its concrete, equally important and mutually reinforcing steps on nuclear disarmament, non-proliferation and peaceful uses of nuclear energy remain valid and provide a mutually acceptable basis to advance towards the ultimate objective of a world without nuclear weapons. We remain resolved to seek a safer world for all in accordance with the goals of the Treaty in a way that promotes international stability, and based on the principle of undiminished security for all. We welcome that the meeting of the UN Security Council on the NPT, held on 2 April 2019 underscored the enduring value of the NPT.

The EU is making a concrete contribution to the NPT review process by funding a series of thematic and regional seminars. We encourage further involvement of academia and civil society and emphasise that active and equal partnership and leadership of women will be crucial in achieving further progress. The Netherlands and Poland will chair two of the three Main

* The Republic of North Macedonia, Montenegro and Albania continue to be part of the Stabilisation and Association Process.
Committees during the upcoming Review Conference and exercise strong cooperation with other Bureau members.

Mr. Chair,

EU Member States remain committed to the pursuit of nuclear disarmament, in accordance with Article VI of the NPT. We stress the need for concrete progress towards the full implementation of Article VI, especially through the overall reduction in the global stockpile of nuclear weapons, taking into account the special responsibility of the States that possess the largest nuclear arsenals. Bearing in mind the increasingly severe and complex security environment, we stress the need to preserve and further advance general arms control and disarmament processes and call for further progress on all aspects of disarmament to enhance global security.

We recall that over the past 30 years, the Intermediate-Range Nuclear Forces (INF) Treaty made a significant contribution to European security and broader international security and stability and we are deeply concerned that it could not be preserved. Almost three thousand missiles with nuclear and conventional warheads were removed from European soil and verifiably destroyed, constituting a tangible contribution by the two nuclear weapon States to the implementation of their NPT related disarmament obligations. We are deeply disappointed that the Russian Federation did not address the serious concerns repeatedly expressed about its missile system 9M729 and the serious concerns this raised about non-compliance with the INF Treaty.

The EU reaffirms its longstanding commitment to verifiable and effective treaty-based nuclear arms control and disarmament. Given the heightened tensions, we must be careful not to enter the path of a new arms race that would offset the significant reductions achieved after the end of the Cold War. Despite the deteriorating security environment, efforts must be pursued in the area of arms control, disarmament and non-proliferation and we believe progress is possible.

The EU will continue to encourage the United States and the Russian Federation to seek further reductions to their arsenals, including strategic and non-strategic, deployed and non-deployed nuclear weapons. We attach the highest importance to the New START Treaty and would welcome early and active dialogue on its future post-2021 and on other arms control arrangements. The EU encourages the United States and the Russian Federation to include also non-strategic nuclear weapons into arms control and nuclear disarmament processes, pursue further discussions on confidence-building, transparency, verification activities and reporting, and to reduce the operational readiness of their nuclear weapons systems to the minimum level necessary.

EU Member States are actively engaged in a variety of processes and initiatives aimed at strengthening the disarmament and non-proliferation regime. We welcome the continuation of P5 dialogue and conferences which can help to decrease tensions and increase collective security. The EU welcomes the Stepping Stones initiative, launched at a Ministerial meeting in Stockholm on 11 June 2019. We also welcome the recent initiative Creating Environment for Nuclear
Disarmament (CEND). We hope these, and other initiatives, will substantially contribute to the success of the NPT review process.

In particular, we welcome the current momentum on risk reduction, including strategic risk reduction measures, which can contribute to alleviating tensions and building the necessary trust and confidence, such as transparency and dialogue on nuclear doctrines and postures, military-to-military dialogues, hotline agreements among nuclear weapon possessors, “accident measure” agreements, and notification exercises, as well as missile launch notification and other data exchange agreements. All States, in particular nuclear weapon States and other States possessing nuclear weapons should engage in such efforts, as outlined in the 2010 NPT Review Conference Action Plan.

The EU notes the severe consequences associated with nuclear weapons use and emphasises that all States share the responsibility to prevent such an occurrence from happening.

Mr. Chair,

The EU reaffirms its resolute commitment to and continued support for the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action (JCPOA), which is a key element of the global nuclear non-proliferation regime and an achievement of multilateral diplomacy, endorsed unanimously by the UN Security Council through Resolution 2231. The EU deeply regrets the withdrawal of the United States from the JCPOA and the re-imposed sanctions. The EU is deeply concerned by the measures taken by Iran since the beginning of July, inconsistent with its nuclear-related commitments under the JCPOA, as reported by the IAEA Director General. We urge Iran to reverse these activities, to refrain from any further steps that risk aggravating the situation and to provide full and timely cooperation with the IAEA including on the implementation of its Safeguards Agreement and the provisional application of the Additional Protocol. We call on all countries to refrain from taking actions that impede the implementation of the JCPOA.

All proliferation crises must be addressed in a resolute way. The repeated ballistic missile launches by the Democratic People's Republic of Korea (DPRK), in violation of multiple UN Security Council Resolutions, continue to undermine international work for building trust and establishing lasting peace and security on the Korean Peninsula, free of nuclear weapons. We call on the DPRK to engage in meaningful negotiations, to refrain from further provocations, and take concrete and credible steps towards building trust and confidence and abandoning all its nuclear weapons and ballistic missile programmes in a complete, verifiable and irreversible manner, as required under multiple UN Security Council resolutions. We urge the DPRK to sign and ratify the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty (CTBT) without delay and to return to compliance with its obligations under the NPT and the IAEA safeguards. The IAEA and the CTBTO, in accordance with their respective mandates, can make an important contribution to the complete, verifiable and irreversible denuclearisation It will be a common endeavour to which several actors can contribute, amongst which nuclear weapon States given their particular
expertise, and also non-nuclear weapon States. Non-proliferation obligations have to be taken into due account by all those involved in the process.

Promoting universal adherence to and the entry into force of the CTBT is a top priority for the EU. All EU Member States have ratified the CTBT and are abiding by its obligations. We urge all States that have not yet done so, in particular those listed in Annex II, to sign and ratify the CTBT without any preconditions and further delay. In the meantime, we call on all States to abide by a moratorium on nuclear weapon test explosions or any other nuclear explosion, and to refrain from any action that would defeat the object and purpose of the Treaty. Over the past years, the EU has provided significant financial support for the activities of the Preparatory Commission for the CTBTO in order to strengthen its monitoring and verification capabilities. We reiterate our full confidence in the CTBT's verification regime, which has demonstrated its ability to provide independent and reliable data that will help to deter non-compliance with the Treaty once it enters into force, and respond to threats to international peace and security.

We reiterate that our longstanding priority in the Conference on Disarmament is to immediately commence negotiations of a treaty banning the production of fissile material for use in nuclear weapons or other explosive devices (FMCT) and we support starting such negotiations in accordance with the document CD/1299 and the mandate contained therein. In the meantime, we call on all States possessing nuclear weapons that have not yet done so to declare and uphold an immediate moratorium on their production of fissile material for use in nuclear weapons or other nuclear explosive devices. We welcome the action by the two European nuclear weapon States, which have declared relevant moratoria and dismantled or converted such facilities, and call on others to follow suit.

We welcome the work conducted within the Group of Governmental Experts on nuclear disarmament verification and support further efforts in all relevant fora, including the International Partnership for Nuclear Disarmament Verification (IPNDV), the Quad Nuclear Verification Partnership (QNVP) and the UK-Norway initiative (UKNI). We welcome the Franco-German Nuclear Disarmament Verification exercise held in September 2019 as a concrete step towards developing reliable and sound multilateral nuclear disarmament verification procedures. While verification is not an end in itself, further development of the multilateral nuclear disarmament verification capabilities would assist in the achievement and maintenance of a world without nuclear weapons.

With regard to negative security assurances, the 2010 NPT Review Conference stated that the CD should immediately begin discussions with a view to elaborating recommendations on all aspects of the issue, without excluding an internationally legally binding instrument. The EU recognises the legitimate interest of non-nuclear weapon States in receiving unequivocal security assurances from nuclear weapon States as part of binding and agreed security arrangements. Negative security assurances can be an important confidence building measure which strengthen
the nuclear non-proliferation regime, contribute to nuclear disarmament and enhance regional and global security, in line with the goals and objectives of the NPT. We call on nuclear weapon States to continue to reaffirm their existing security assurances, noted by relevant UN Security Council resolutions.

We recall that Russia has violated its commitment to refrain from the threat or use of force against the territorial integrity or sovereignty of Ukraine under the Budapest Memorandum of 1994 on security assurances, in connection with Ukraine's accession to the NPT as a non-nuclear weapon State.

We acknowledge the importance of nuclear weapon free zones for peace and security, in accordance with Article VII of the Treaty. Such zones should be established on the basis of arrangements freely arrived by all the States in the region concerned, as set out in the 1999 Guidelines of the UN Disarmament Commission (UNDC). The EU recognises that treaty-based security assurances are available to nuclear weapon free zones and encourages nuclear weapon States to sign and ratify the relevant protocols of the Treaties establishing nuclear weapon free zones drawn up following the requisite consultations. We also call on those States in existing nuclear weapon free zones that have not yet done so to sign and ratify the relevant nuclear weapon free zone treaties.

The EU reaffirms its full support for the establishment of a zone free of nuclear and all other weapons of mass destruction and their delivery systems in the Middle East. We consider the 1995 Resolution valid until its goals and objectives are achieved and strongly support the outcome of the 2010 NPT Review Conference on the Middle East. The EU has continuously expressed its readiness to assist in the process and help produce a conducive atmosphere. In June 2019, EU Ministers adopted a new EU Council Decision that provides funding to the UN Institute for Disarmament Research (UNIDIR) on a process of confidence-building leading to the establishment of a zone free of nuclear weapons and all other weapons of mass destruction and their delivery systems in the Middle East.

Thank you, Mr. Chair