STATEMENT
by
His Excellency
Ambassador Michal Mlynár
Permanent Representative of the Slovak Republic
to the United Nations in New York
at the Thematic Discussion on Nuclear Weapons
of the First Committee of the 74th Session
of the General Assembly of the United Nations

New York, 22 October 2019
- Check against delivery -
Thank you Mr. Chairman.

Slovakia associates itself with the statements delivered by the European Union, as well as the Netherlands on behalf of a group of states. We would like to make some additional remarks in national capacity and full version of my statement will be uploaded on the papersmart portal.

Mr. Chairman,

Let me express unequivocal support of Slovakia for the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty (NPT), which is the cornerstone of the global nuclear non-proliferation and disarmament architecture and an indispensable multilateral instrument reinforcing international peace and security.

Next year’s 50th anniversary of the NPT should guide our shared responsibility to make the 2020 Review Conference a success and make further progress on strengthening the NPT regime. There can be no doubt that the NPT is a success story. Throughout the five decades of its existence, this Treaty has made, and continues to make our world safer.

We need to focus on our common interests in supporting and strengthening the Treaty. All State Parties must implement their obligations and commitments assumed under the Treaty or undertaken during its Review Conferences. We also need to make the NPT a truly global instrument through continuous promotion of its universalisation. All three NPT pillars are of equal importance.

Slovakia is committed to achieving the goal of a nuclear-weapons-free world. We support a pragmatic and progressive approach of mutually reinforcing legal measures and practical instruments to promote nuclear disarmament, which – and I want to underline this – takes into account the prevailing security environment. In this regard, Slovakia welcomes the recent initiative of Creating Environment for Nuclear Disarmament (CEND).

The International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) is a vital part of the international multilateral system. We highlight the importance of the IAEA safeguards system in the implementation of the NPT. Slovakia fully supports IAEA’s independent and impartial verification role in the implementation of safeguards. We are of the view that Comprehensive Safeguards Agreements together with Additional Protocols constitute the current verification standard and we support their universalisation.

Regarding the 3rd NPT pillar, Slovakia fully supports the IAEA in promoting peaceful uses of nuclear energy, including through nuclear science, applications and technology. Nuclear energy and its peaceful uses remains a key priority for
Slovakia. Peaceful nuclear cooperation is one of the important enablers in the delivery of socioeconomic growth, both on national as well as international level. The entry into force of the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty (CTBT) is a crucial step for advancing non-proliferation and disarmament. We call on all States that have not yet done so, in particular the remaining Annex II States, to sign and ratify the CTBT without further delay.

We underline the need to maintain momentum towards the completion of all elements of the verification regime. Slovakia has actively been contributing to building the CTBTO Preparatory Commission capacities and makes all efforts to reinforce its verification regime. Since 2001, Slovakia has hosted various training activities on its territory. Next year, Slovakia is honoured to host two field CTBT Build-Up Exercises aimed at conducting comprehensive testing of the On-Site Inspection operational capabilities.

Slovakia supports the immediate commencement of negotiations in the Conference on Disarmament on a treaty banning the production of fissile material for use in nuclear weapons or other explosive devices (FMCT) in accordance with the document CD/1299 and the mandate contained therein. 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.

Mr. Chairman,

Slovakia is concerned that the arms control, non-proliferation and disarmament architecture is under extreme stress and faces major challenges.

We are deeply concerned by the collapse of the Intermediate-Range Nuclear Forces (INF) Treaty. Slovakia is disappointed that the Russian Federation, despite numerous diplomatic calls from NATO and the EU member states, did not renew its full compliance with its treaty obligations and did not take the necessary actions in order to preserve this key pillar of European security.

Slovakia continues to attach great importance to the New START Treaty and its contribution to arms control and disarmament. We encourage both State Parties to lead an active dialogue on extending the New START Treaty beyond 2021. We also encourage both sides to seek further reductions to their arsenals including strategic and non-strategic, deployed and non-deployed nuclear weapons and discuss further on confidence building, transparency, verification activities and reporting.

Slovakia expresses its continued strong support for the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action (JCPOA), which is a major contribution to nuclear non-proliferation and a success of multilateral diplomacy. In light of the recent tensions, its preservation continues to be essential for the regional stability and security. We
regret the withdrawal of the United States from the JCPOA and the re-imposition of US sanctions. We are 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 call on Iran to reverse all activities inconsistent with its commitments and urge all sides to refrain from activities that could further undermine the JCPOA. Latest developments only underline the need for diplomatic efforts of all stakeholders towards de-escalation and preservation of this important agreement.

The complete, verifiable and irreversible denuclearization of the Korean Peninsula is a legitimate goal and a condition for securing international and regional peace. DPRK’s ballistic and nuclear programs represent a major challenge for the international community. 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. It must cease nuclear weapons and ballistic missile programs and comply with all its international obligations, including respective UN Security Council Resolutions. We call on DPRK to sign and ratify the CTBT without any delay.

Slovakia supports international efforts that mitigate nuclear risks and help prevent terrorists and other non-state actors from acquiring, trafficking or use of nuclear or other radioactive materials, such as UN Security Council resolutions 1540 and 2325 or the Global Initiative to Combat Nuclear Terrorism (GICNT) or Proliferation Security Initiative (PSI).

Thank you, Mr. Chairman.