Canada – Cluster one statement

2007 NPT PrepCom, Vienna

Thank you Mr. Chairman,

Issues under cluster one go straight to the credibility of the NPT. The ultimate practical value of the treaty is its role in minimizing and ultimately eliminating the potential that a nuclear weapon may be used. This is done both through restricting the spread of nuclear weapons and through a commitment to their ultimate elimination. We have seen positive signs on these fronts but there is more work to be done.

Non-proliferation has historically been an area of relative success, and the NPT now enjoys near-universal membership. But today, certain states both inside and outside the NPT are challenging this record of success. If another state were to develop nuclear weapon capabilities, it would necessarily involve an NPT State Party acting in breach of its treaty commitments. In turn, if more states develop nuclear weapon capabilities, this could, in time, provoke others to do likewise, and undermine the security of all. We must take all appropriate measures to ensure that this does not happen.

The possibility of terrorists acquiring a nuclear weapon is also one against which significant efforts have been deployed. These efforts must continue; while thus far we have been successful, the threat remains significant.

Nuclear disarmament has a mixed record. In recent years, the US and Russia - with by far the largest nuclear arsenals - have agreed to important reductions, and committed to further significant cuts in the framework of the Moscow Treaty. These are positive steps which hopefully can be sustained and expanded to all states with nuclear weapons. Further, NATO as well as individual Allies have taken numerous steps in support of disarmament, reducing the number of nuclear weapons in Europe by 85 percent since 1991 (almost 95 percent since the height of the Cold War) and achieving the complete elimination of certain categories of NATO-assigned nuclear weapons systems deployed in Europe. Further, the UK announced in December of 2006 that it would reduce its stockpile from 200 to less than 160 warheads. France has also made significant reductions in recent years. These actions are in keeping with NPT commitments.

At the same time, merely measuring disarmament in terms of overall numbers of weapons has its limitations. While the total may be in decline on a global basis, some states are actively increasing their arsenals, the DPRK has tested a nuclear device, and there are fears that others may be seeking to acquire nuclear weapons. Furthermore, publicly-available numbers themselves are at best educated guesses, given the lack of reliable open-source information available. And perhaps most importantly, there are no guarantees that the recent positive trend will continue when the Moscow Treaty expires at the end of 2012. Transparency and irreversibility, along with active engagement of all states with nuclear weapons in the process of nuclear disarmament, are key principles
which will not only further the cause of disarmament, but also allow for proper recognition when positive steps are taken.

For a more comprehensive review of practical disarmament measures, the 13 Steps agreed at the 2000 NPT Review Conference provide objective benchmarks against which we can measure progress. There are areas where we can point to significant implementation over the past seven years: reductions in nuclear arsenals are being achieved, some de-alerting has taken place, many states are providing regular reports on Article VI implementation and related matters, and we have seen a development of verification capabilities.

There are practical ways to build on these successes. During informal discussions at the CD earlier this year, Canada proposed that NWS provide annual briefings on their nuclear policy and doctrine. Such briefings could enhance transparency and confidence among nuclear and non-nuclear powers. An extension of this idea would see states with nuclear weapons provide information on number and types of nuclear weapons, both in current arsenals and projected levels in five years. States could also provide updates on the status of weapons and delivery systems removed from active service or dismantled, and on initiatives to release nuclear material from national nuclear weapons programmes and other conversion efforts. In addition to transparency benefits, such provision of information would yield objective indicators of disarmament trends.

Another potentially achievable objective would be a multilateral agreement to reduce the operational readiness of deployed nuclear systems to a specified level, through both “de-alerting” and “de-mating”. This would require detailed technical discussions, but the current favourable international political and security environment should facilitate such action by states with nuclear weapons. Progress on this issue would promote mutual confidence among NWS, lessen the chance of an accidental launch, and also show the positive potential for multilateral action in the nuclear field.

But returning to the 13 steps, there are many areas where more action is needed. The first steps refer to the entry into force of the CTBT and negotiation on an FMCT. Once fully established, these two multilateral instruments would substantially strengthen the foundation of the international nuclear non-proliferation and disarmament regime by prohibiting nuclear test explosions and the production of fissile material for nuclear weapons purposes. For these and the other remaining Steps, what is needed are measures to facilitate work, such as establishing an agreed framework by which we can evaluate progress, just as we have (through the IAEA) for non-proliferation. Clearly there is room for improved performance, and no shortage of practical ideas on how to move these items forward.

I thank you Mr. Chairman
Canada – Statement on nuclear disarmament and negative security assurances

2007 NPT PrepCom, Vienna

Thank you Mr. Chairman,

I would like to begin my statement today with reference to some ideas raised during yesterday’s debate that my delegation would like to highlight and respond to.

Many delegations yesterday spoke positively about the P6 proposal at the CD, as Canada did in its opening statement. The PrepCom would send a constructive signal to Geneva if it could express support for the P6 proposal and encourage the CD to proceed on this basis, which would in turn allow progress towards objectives which have previously been agreed to in the NPT context.

We also note that many delegations raised the importance of transparency and reporting. Canada supports this practice as well. We have submitted two reports to this PrepCom, one on implementation of the Middle East resolution and one on implementation of all aspects of the Treaty. Given the organic and interrelated nature of NPT commitments, we encourage states to report not simply on Article VI, but on implementation of all aspects of the Treaty.

The point was raised that nuclear disarmament is not merely a question of numbers, but also of doctrine, policy, and a commitment to irreversibility. In Canada’s statement yesterday we noted the importance of transparency, which extends to all these aspects, not only to create an accurate picture of nuclear disarmament, but also to allow appropriate recognition for the efforts of the nuclear weapons states. We wholeheartedly support the idea that further openness with regard to nuclear disarmament can only build confidence among the nuclear weapons states and between NWS and NNWS.

Finally I would note the idea of a chart, raised by Brazil, which would bring together and highlight efforts of NWS to meet their Article VI commitments, is one such creative idea that merits support and further exploration. This would recognize the real gains made so far and perhaps even introduce some healthy competition, as well as providing a concrete and visible way for further gains to be recognized.

Pending further progress on these issues, it is logical that NNWS would seek assurances against use or threat of use of nuclear weapons. Negative security assurances are a commitment for NPT states parties stemming from the 1995 UN Security Council Resolution 984 and reaffirmed subsequently by the 2nd decision of the 1995 NPT Review and Extension Conference. This decision states in part that further steps should be considered to assure NPT NNWS against the use or threat of use of nuclear weapons,
and further, that such steps could take the form of an internationally legally binding instrument.

Five years later, at the 2000 RevCon, the Final Document confirmed a Conference agreement that legally binding security assurances by the NWS strengthen the nuclear non-proliferation regime.

Discussion of legally-binding negative security assurances would most logically take place in the context of the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty. NSAs should be seen as a key benefit of adherence to the Treaty for non-nuclear weapons states, and the complications that would arise from categorizing the states not party to the NPT would make it extremely difficult to work outside the NPT, in our view.

Unilateral assurances were given by the 5 NWS prior to the 1995 NPT Review and Extension Conference. These rule out use of nuclear weapons against non-nuclear weapons states parties to the NPT except in the specific case of an attack in alliance with a nuclear weapon state (China's NSA is broader and assures no first use under any circumstances). These are of course statements of policy and not legally binding, but nevertheless of great value.

In our discussions of NSAs, we must also clarify whether there is a distinction to be made among NPT NNWS. If, for example, a state is not in good standing, is it still entitled to assurances? What about NNWS that withdraw? How does this affect NSAs that may be in place? And also of importance: are the unilateral assurances made by the NWS in 1995 still valid, despite new doctrines announced by some of them? If not, what if any assurances remain from these states? Canada looks forward to further discussion of these issues.

Finally Mr. Chairman, I would note that these ideas as well as those presented yesterday can be found in document NPT/CONF.2010/PC.I/WP.29.

I thank you Mr. Chairman.