Second Session of the Preparatory Committee for the 2020 Review Conference of the Parties to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons

Improving the effectiveness of the strengthened review process

Statement by Canada

Mr. Chair,

I would like to thank you for allocating time to discuss how to strengthen the review process.

At the 1995 Review and Extension Conference, States parties adopted a decision to improve the structure of our engagement under the NPT, and to enhance the framework we use to review its implementation. This decision laid out a set of broad guidelines regarding the purpose, duration, and interval of sessions of the Preparatory Committee, in addition to recommendations on the structure and scope of subsequent Review Conferences. Further changes were agreed to in 2000 and 2010, establishing the review process as we know it.

While this evolution has led to useful changes, the format and modalities of the review cycle could be further improved in a number of ways to the overall benefit of the NPT. At present, each session of the PrepCom is intended to provide recommendations to the review conference, however, this process does not provide a clear and effective mechanism for integration of the outcomes of each PrepCom in RevCon, or enable these sessions to build on each other progressively.

Similarly, despite the advantages which would flow from greater collaboration between chairs of successive PrepComs, and from transmitting points of consensus and key conclusions garnered throughout the review cycle to the RevCon President, no such mechanism has been agreed upon. Other promising proposals to reform the review cycle have been put forward, but have not been explored or implemented. These include ways to improve the use of time in NPT meetings, increasing interactive debate, enhancing transparency and accountability, and enabling a more thorough review of the status of implementation of commitments undertaken at prior RevCons.

Canada believes that most States support action to strengthen the NPT’s review process. We recognize, however, that some states may find it difficult to devote time to this issue given competing priorities during NPT meetings.

It is our view that discussions on reform of the review cycle are in fact complementary to the substantive discussions across each of the NPT’s three pillars. Indeed, if we can improve the efficiency and effectiveness of the review process, we will improve the quality of our engagement, and our ability to strengthen the Treaty and make progress on its implementation.

In this regard, Canada would like to highlight the NPDI’s working paper entitled “Action to Strengthen the Review Process” submitted to this session of the PrepCom. Among other ideas, this paper proposes the establishment of a working group on this issue at the 2020 Review Conference, or sooner. We urge all delegations to review this document, and provide views on how this important issue could be carried forward.

Thank you.