Statement by the United States in Cluster 3: Specific Issue
Strengthened Review Process

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

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to the Conference on Disarmament

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Mr. Chairman,

The United States remains committed to the 1995 decision related to Art VIII on strengthening the review process. As we approach the 25th anniversary of that decision, it is appropriate to consider how this process has worked and explore ways to refine and further strengthen it, taking into account refinements adopted in 2000 and 2010. NPT Parties made a concerted effort to develop specific proposals in 2016. We appreciate the decision by the cross-regional Nonproliferation and Disarmament Initiative (NPROD) group to put forth a working paper during this Preparatory Committee meeting initiating dialogue on where improvements might be appropriate. We welcome discussion of specific proposals and continued participation in these discussions.

The Netherlands, as the Chairman of the first Preparatory Committee of this review cycle, initiated some commendable actions that we would support maintaining. First among these is the concerted effort to listen to NPT Party’s interests and concerns. Working with the organizers of the regional seminars and engaging directly with Parties (and broader constituencies that may not be able to participate in formal NPT sessions) has the effect of creating a growing network of knowledgeable supporters of the NPT. Outreach should always be a priority for NPT leadership. We appreciate that the Polish Chairman has followed in Dutch footsteps and have the impression that, as in 2017, the work undertaken intersessionally has had a positive effect on our proceedings. Clearly, we are in a period in which the NPT needs to be reaffirmed and reinforced as the bedrock of the nuclear nonproliferation regime for the last 50 years.

After the 2015 Review Conference, it was clear that leadership needed to be nominated by regional groups and agreed by States Party at the earliest possible juncture. This has allowed the Chairmen to reach out and consult properly with Parties. Having Malaysia step forward so quickly to fill the 2019 Chairmanship will allow the momentum of the first two PrepComs to be retained. We look forward to having a full bureau in place as soon as possible.

Equally important is for the leadership team to bring forward ideas worth building upon through the review cycle. Last year, the Dutch Chairman sought to pass on a set of lessons learned, both through the Chairman’s 2017 summary and recommendations and by welcoming this year’s Polish Chairman to its series of regional meetings. These meetings are an important innovation
that we would like to see continue throughout this review cycle. We commend both countries for devoting significant resources during their tenures as Chair. We appreciate the Dutch hosting a side event here focused on thinking about the priorities Parties need to identify and unite around to enhance the chances of a successful RevCon in 2020.

We appreciate Poland’s dedication to continuing this positive trend and pledge our support to Malaysia as it begins to make its preparations for the 2019 Chairmanship.

An effort to regularly engage Parties brings the possibility to recalibrate expectations and inject new ideas. The procedures, mechanisms, and organization of our review process are important. Finding new and improved ways to make the review process work smarter and better for all States Party cannot help but strengthen it, and thereby, strengthen the NPT itself.

For example, much work has gone into the drafting of national reports on implementation of the treaty, but it is not clear what impact these reports have had on the review process. We welcome the proposal for presentations and interactive discussions of these reports. In addition, we would encourage the Bureau to consider ways to build on outreach initiated by our Dutch and Polish Chairmen, perhaps focusing on specific issues – such as peaceful uses of nuclear energy – and broadening the audience to include less traditional stakeholders. With a view to the RevCon, there needs to be a review of how cross-cutting issues are handled, in order to look at them holistically, rather than separately in each main cluster. Introduction of subsidiary bodies in 2000 was a useful innovation but to maintain its utility we need to be flexible about the mandate of each subsidiary body. Every effort should be made to find consensus but we should be flexible as to how to reflect that to be able to capture positive outcomes.

Let us devote, therefore, the requisite attention needed in the coming year to discussing measures we could consider at the Review Conference that would allow our work to be as productive and meaningful as possible.

Thank you, Mr. Chairman.