European Union

Statement on Cluster I issues

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Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT)

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Mr. Chairman,

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

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

As we approach the 2020 Review Conference, we encourage all States Parties to focus on seeking common ground. The EU will play a constructive and active role in ensuring the implementation of the obligations and commitments assumed under the NPT and undertaken during the previous Review Conferences. In our General Statement, we have outlined the EU’s balanced approach in support of the NPT and its three pillars which are equally important and mutually reinforcing and contribute to international peace, security and stability. 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 are 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 call for further progress on all aspects of disarmament to enhance global security.

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. It is important that all parties contribute to improving the strategic context for disarmament, non-proliferation and arms control and avoid eroding the rules-based multilateral system. The viability and effectiveness of arms control, disarmament and non-proliferation agreements require that they be fully complied with.

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.

In this context, we attach the highest importance to the New START Treaty and 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. By increasing

* North Macedonia, Montenegro, Serbia and Albania continue to be part of the Stabilisation and Association Process.
predictability and mutual confidence amongst the two largest nuclear weapon States, the New START limits strategic competition and increases strategic stability. The reduction of strategic nuclear arsenals under the Treaty, enhanced notably by its robust verification mechanism, contributes to the implementation of Article VI of the NPT. We encourage early and active dialogue on the future of the New START post-2021 and on potential new arms control arrangements between the US and Russia which is important to preserve strategic stability and lock in the achievements reached on nuclear disarmament beyond the existing treaty.

In particular, the EU encourages the United States and the Russian Federation to include 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.

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. We welcome the continuation of P5 conferences which should contribute to the NPT review process.

In this context, the EU welcomes the increased transparency shown by the two European nuclear weapon States on the nuclear weapons they possess and the concrete measures they have taken in the field of nuclear disarmament.

Over the past 30 years, the Intermediate-Range Nuclear Forces (INF) Treaty has made an enormous contribution to European security and broader international security and stability. 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. The EU has repeatedly noted that the Russian missile system raises serious concerns regarding Russian compliance with the INF Treaty and we urge Russia to address these concerns in a substantial and transparent manner. We emphasise the continued importance of full and verifiable compliance under the Treaty prior to the expiry of the six-month withdrawal process, which represents the last opportunity for dialogue and for taking the necessary measures to preserve the Treaty.

Promoting universal adherence to and the entry into force of the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty (CTBT) is a top priority for the EU. All EU Member States have ratified the CTBT and are abiding by its obligations. We deeply regret the fact that the CTBT is not yet in force and 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. Since many years,
the EU provides extensive financial support for the activities of the Preparatory Commission for the CTBTO in order to strengthen its monitoring and verification capabilities.

The EU reaffirms its commitment to verifiable treaty-based nuclear arms control and disarmament, and stresses the need to revitalise multilateral efforts and bodies, in particular the Conference on Disarmament (CD). We regret that it was not possible to reach consensus on a Programme of Work or a Decision for the 2019 session that would have allowed subsidiary bodies to continue substantive work towards negotiations, as well as further reflection on working methods and the CD enlargement.

We reiterate that our longstanding priority in the CD is to immediately commence negotiations of a treaty banning the production of fissile material for 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. We welcome the unanimous reaffirmation of this aim by the High Level FMCT Expert Preparatory Group and encourage a discussion on its findings during the 2019 CD session. The EU has continued to provide financial support to the UN Office for Disarmament Affairs (UNODA) to facilitate the participation of African, Asian, Latin American and Caribbean countries in FMCT related consultations and other activities.

In light of these long-standing commitments, the EU has decided to become a supporter of four actions on the UN Secretary-General’s Agenda for Disarmament, including on promoting the entry into force of the CTBT and commencing immediate negotiations in the Conference on Disarmament on a Fissile Material Cut-off Treaty, in accordance with the above mentioned EU position.

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 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 that consensus was found on the report of the Group of Governmental Experts on nuclear disarmament verification and support the continuation of work in other relevant fora, such as 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 to be held in September this year as a concrete step towards developing reliable and sound multilateral nuclear disarmament verification procedures. We encourage all nuclear weapon States and other States possessing nuclear weapons to contribute to such activities which can help to deepen trust and develop confidence also between nuclear and non-nuclear weapon States.

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. We
call on all nuclear weapon States to reaffirm the 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 at among the States of 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.

We support disarmament and non-proliferation education, to which the EU Non-Proliferation Consortium, the European network of independent think-tanks, is contributing with various activities. 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 on nuclear disarmament.

Thank you, Mr. Chairman.