NPT Review Conference Preparatory Committee
Third Session
Cluster I Issues

Statement by Finland
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Head of Delegation

New York, 2 May 2019

(check against delivery)
Mr Chair,

In addition to the statement by the European Union, I am honoured to deliver our national statement on Cluster I issues.

Article VI of the NPT provides a permanent and universally recognised basis for pursuing nuclear disarmament. It is an embodiment of our common quest to achieve a world free of nuclear weapons.

There is no short cut to nuclear disarmament. Reaching global zero requires verifiable and irreversible steps by states possessing nuclear weapons, whether parties to the NPT or not. Nuclear disarmament is primarily a responsibility of these states. At the same time, nuclear disarmament – or lack thereof – is of direct concern to each and every nation of the world.

We recognise that nuclear disarmament is a gradual process, requiring proper attention for the legitimate security concerns of all. We also recognise that the total number of nuclear weapons today is significantly lower than during the dreadful days of the Cold War. This reduction is undoubtedly a major contribution to nuclear disarmament.

The work is far from done, however. On the contrary, the state of nuclear disarmament today is a cause for growing concern. Amidst rising tensions and big power competition, and an increased reliance on nuclear weapons in policies and doctrines, there does not seem to be any convergence of views on how to advance nuclear disarmament.

In today’s difficult security environment, new and innovative thinking on nuclear disarmament is urgently needed. At this PrepCom, it has also been forthcoming. We welcome and commend the proposals presented by the NPDI on transparency, by Sweden on a stepping stone approach, and by the United States on creating an environment for nuclear disarmament. We look forward to working together with all delegations in taking these ideas forward.
Mr Chair,

We welcome the increased attention given to nuclear risk reduction. A comprehensive and considered approach to risk reduction can help to identify areas of common interest as a basis for joint action. This in turn may pave a way to increased trust and provide pathways advancing nuclear disarmament.

States parties have put forward a number of concrete nuclear risk reduction proposals during the review cycles of the NPT. It has become clear that many of these proposals are highly contested. Even a most sincere risk reduction proposal may be perceived by another party as increasing the risk of nuclear use. Concepts such as credible deterrence, strategic stability or nuclear ambiguity – and their desirability – are interpreted in many different ways.

What we need is a more comprehensive approach to nuclear risk reduction. A logical first step would be a higher degree of precision and systematisation in discussions on risk reduction to get states parties on the same page regarding existing ideas and proposals. This can make it easier to identify possible areas of common interest, facilitating the development of practical and feasible measures.

An example of a very simple practical step would be increasing transparency through improving national reporting in the NPT context. Many good proposals have been made over the years on enhanced and more uniform national reporting on nuclear weapons and doctrines. Why not take concrete action on these? Open, interactive presentations of their reports by the nuclear weapon states such as provided by the United Kingdom at this PrepCom would be a very welcome addition.

Finland is pleased to collaborate with UNIDIR on a study on ways to advance nuclear risk reduction. The aim is to identify varying mutually reinforcing actionable elements of nuclear risk reduction as pathways towards lessened risk of nuclear use and nuclear disarmament.
Mr Chair,

Risk reduction, evidently, cannot substitute for nuclear disarmament. Risk reduction can however be a valuable building block in nuclear disarmament efforts. It is with good reason that nuclear risk reduction is included on the agenda of subsidiary body 1 of the Review Conference.

Thank you, Mr Chair.