Statement by the Czech Republic

Third session of the Preparatory Committee
for the 2020 NPT Review Conference

Cluster I

New York, 29 April – 10 May 2019
Mr. Chairman,

Since I am taking the floor for the first time, allow me to express my delegation’s sincere congratulations to you on your election as the Chairman of this Preparatory Committee meeting. You can rely on our cooperation and support. The Czech Republic fully aligns itself with the statement delivered by the European Union. I would like to add the following remarks in the national capacity.

The Czech Republic subscribes to a balanced approach to all three pillars of the NPT. The right to peaceful use of nuclear energy cannot be denied to any new entity to the field of nuclear applications, both energy and non-energy ones. Yet all existing rules and obligations should be strictly respected and duly verified, in order to prevent proliferation of nuclear weapons and possible misuse of nuclear materials and technologies. Complete nuclear disarmament, whatever distant in time, should remain a final goal for the international community and, in particular, for those possessing nuclear arms. We shall never recognize the nuclear status of any other state beyond the current P5 members of the NPT.

However, we are of the view that the longstanding objective of the complete elimination of nuclear weapons may be achieved only under certain conditions. The effective functioning of the non-proliferation regime on a global scale coupled with a robust verification regime providing assurances of irreversibility of nuclear disarmament are indispensable for a world without nuclear weapons. Therefore, we stress the need to faithfully implement all steps agreed in the 2010 Action Plan. Promoting the concept of “building blocks” and step-by-step disarmament approach could lead us to achieving the global Zero, as it was already proposed at several occasions.

The Czech Republic is of the opinion that seeking to ban nuclear weapons through a treaty that will not engage any state actually possessing nuclear weapons will not be effective, will not reduce nuclear arsenals and will not enhance international peace and stability. Any effective, verifiable and irreversible disarmament must be inclusive, firmly rooted in the NPT and it should recognize that elimination of nuclear weapons is a long-term process which requires constructive dialogue with the nuclear weapons states.

The Czech Republic attaches high priority to the commencement and early conclusion of negotiations in the Conference on Disarmament on a non-discriminatory, multilateral and legally-binding treaty banning the production of fissile material for nuclear weapons or other nuclear explosive devices (FMCT) under the Shannon Mandate. We remain convinced that FMCT is the next logical step on the way to nuclear disarmament. It would significantly contribute to both non-proliferation and disarmament objectives. Such a treaty is needed in order to encourage further progress also on other arms control and disarmament issues.

Every occasion must be used to call upon those States that have not yet signed or ratified the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test Ban Treaty (CTBT). This meeting is a good occasion to remind it, in particular to the remaining States listed in Annex 2 to the CTBT, including the two nuclear weapons states whose ratification is necessary for its entry into force. Pending the entry into force of the CTBT, we welcome the moratoria on nuclear test explosions and we call on all states to comply with such a moratorium and to refrain from conducting any action contrary to the obligations and provisions of the Treaty. However, such voluntary moratoria can never substitute the legal ban constituted by the CTBT, as they can be unilaterally revoked at any time. Recognizing the importance of the CTBT, the Czech Republic fully
supports the efforts of the Provisional Technical Secretariat (PTS) to further develop the CTBT verification regime as a strong non-proliferation and confidence-building instrument.

The Czech Republic attaches great importance to the development of internationally recognized nuclear weapon free zones, established in accordance with agreements among States in the regions concerned. In our view, nowhere is this more important than in the Middle East today. We share the opinion that the Middle East issue deserves a more comprehensive solution, including elimination of all categories of weapons of mass destruction and peace settlement in the region.

Due to the current deteriorating security environment, it is necessary to preserve and further advance existing disarmament processes for the sake of global security. As a non-nuclear weapon state, the Czech Republic will continue to fulfil its obligations under the NPT and remains fully committed to its objective of achieving and maintaining of a world without nuclear weapons and all other weapons of mass destruction.

Thank you for your attention.