Statement by Chinese Delegation at the Third Session of the Preparatory Committee for the 2020 NPT Review Conference on Security Assurance
(2 May 2019, New York)

Mr. Chair,

Security assurance to non-nuclear-weapon States is an important issue in the field of nuclear non-proliferation and nuclear disarmament. Currently, some countries enhance the role of nuclear weapons in national security doctrine and lower the threshold for the use of nuclear weapons, which increase the risk of a nuclear war. Proper resolution of this issue is of great practical significance in reducing the risk of the use of nuclear weapons and promoting the nuclear disarmament process. It would also contribute to reducing the motivation of non-nuclear-weapon States to pursue nuclear weapons so as to safeguard and strengthen the international nuclear non-proliferation regime.

It is fully justified and reasonable for the non-nuclear-weapon States to demand not to be threatened by nuclear weapons and to insist that such assurance be solidified in a legally-binding manner, since they undertake not to develop or acquire nuclear weapons. Security assurance should be regarded as an important measure to prevent nuclear weapons proliferation and to safeguard international nuclear non-proliferation regime with the NPT as its cornerstone, rather than a one-way benefaction given by nuclear-weapon States to non-nuclear-weapon States.
The complete prohibition and thorough destruction of nuclear weapons by nuclear-weapon States, remains as the fundamental solution to address the issue of security assurance. Pending the ultimate realization of this goal, nuclear-weapon States should unequivocally undertake not to be the first to use nuclear weapons at any time or under any circumstance, and undertake unconditionally not to use or threaten to use nuclear weapons against non-nuclear-weapon States or nuclear-weapon-free zones, and conclude an international legal instrument without delay in this regard. Under current circumstances, this is not only the most effective way to resolve the issue of security assurance, but also the most realistic nuclear disarmament measure.

Furthermore, in order to settle non-nuclear-weapon States’ security concern, all nuclear-weapon States should diminish the role played by nuclear weapons in their national security polices, abandon the nuclear deterrence policy based on the first use of nuclear weapons and refrain from listing any country as target of nuclear strikes or targeting the nuclear weapons under their control at any country.

Mr. Chair,

China has all along committed itself not to be the first to use nuclear weapons at any time or under any circumstance, and committed itself unconditionally not to use or threaten to use nuclear weapons against non-nuclear-weapon States and nuclear-weapon-free zones. China always calls upon other nuclear-weapon States to undertake such commitments and conclude an international legal instrument to this end. China formally presented a draft “Treaty on Mutual No-First-Use of Nuclear Weapons” to the other Nuclear Weapon States in January 1994, and has actively sought to enter into commitments with other nuclear-weapon States, on a bilateral or multilateral basis, on no-first-use of nuclear weapons.

China supports the Conference on Disarmament (CD) in Geneva to start substantive work on concluding an international legal instrument on security assurance to non-nuclear-weapon States at an early date. Meanwhile, China
holds an open attitude and is willing to positively consider any proposal or measure which will contribute to progress on security assurance to non-nuclear-weapon States.

Mr. Chair,

It is the universal aspiration of non-nuclear-weapon States to acquire unconditional and legally binding security assurance. China hopes this aspiration would be realized at an early date and is willing to work with the international community to that end.

The Chinese delegation has submitted a working paper on security assurance issue, and we hope that elements contained therein will be duly reflected in the report of the Preparatory Committee.

Thank you, Mr. Chair.