

**STATEMENT BY AMBASSADOR KAREN TAN,  
PERMANENT REPRESENTATIVE OF SINGAPORE  
TO THE UNITED NATIONS,  
AT THE 2015 REVIEW CONFERENCE OF THE PARTIES TO  
THE TREATY ON THE  
NON-PROLIFERATION OF NUCLEAR WEAPONS  
29 APRIL 2015**

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Madam President,

My warmest congratulations on your election as the President of the 2015 Review Conference of Parties to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT). Singapore is confident that under your able stewardship, the meeting will produce a successful outcome. We express our full support for you.

Madam President,

2 The NPT is increasingly facing a crisis of legitimacy and relevance. At the 2010 Review Conference, we worked together to reach a hard-won consensus on the Action Plan. It was an important step towards the reaffirmation of the legitimacy and relevance of the Treaty. However, five years on, progress on the Action Plan has unfortunately been limited. The Nuclear Weapon States (NWS) have yet to make concrete progress on nuclear disarmament. A few states remain conspicuously absent from the NPT. The Conference on the establishment of a Middle East zone free of nuclear weapons and all other weapons of mass destruction continues to be in limbo. Discourse on the progress of the three pillars has become increasingly political and divisive, due to serious questions of non-compliance and unfairness. All these have resulted in a widening gulf of mistrust between NWS and Non-Nuclear Weapon States (NNWS). They have also raised serious doubts about the continued efficacy and credibility of the treaty as a non-proliferation instrument. Let me elaborate on some of the challenges under each of the three pillars of the Treaty in turn.

**1<sup>st</sup> Pillar: Nuclear Disarmament**

3 On nuclear disarmament, the NWS have engaged NNWS on issues including the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty (CTBT), the voluntary

moratorium on conducting any nuclear explosion, and the updates on the New START. There were also regular consultations amongst the NWS on disarmament issues. But there is little concrete progress on the implementation of Article VI by the NWS. The process is also not transparent to NNWS. Some NWS appear more reluctant than others to contemplate genuine or substantive cuts to their nuclear arsenals. This will only reinforce the perception that NWS still fundamentally believe that nuclear deterrence remains necessary for their long-term national security, and lead to more questions about their commitment towards disarmament.

4 As long as some countries continue to have nuclear weapons and others do not, the imbalance will always engender a sense of insecurity and distrust. NWS can do much more to assure NNWS of their commitment towards the fulfilment of their disarmament obligations. NNWS are becoming more impatient with the lack of progress almost 20 years after the NWS committed to nuclear disarmament. There is a growing perception that NWS have not lived up to the bargains made in 1995 for the indefinite extension of the NPT.

5 From Singapore's perspective, there are several steps that can be taken to advance nuclear disarmament. **First**, we urge all NWS to make concrete commitments to significantly reduce their nuclear arsenals in a transparent, irreversible and verifiable manner. In particular, we hope that the US and Russia will make progress in their discussions on further cuts to their nuclear arsenals from the level agreed in the New START. **Second**, all NWS should also refrain from making qualitative improvements to their nuclear weapons and testing them. To this end, the CTBT remains a key tool to advance disarmament, nuclear non-proliferation and to build mutual trust and confidence. We strongly urge all countries, in particular the Annex 2 countries that have yet to sign and ratify the CTBT, to do so. Progress also needs to be made at the Conference on Disarmament and on the Fissile Material Cut-Off Treaty (FMCT). **Third**, while we continue to work towards the universalisation of the NPT, we also hope that this Conference can find ways to involve those outside the NPT in disarmament discussions as a matter of priority. Their continued exclusion undermines the legitimacy of the treaty and our collective efforts towards nuclear disarmament.

6 The humanitarian dimension of the impact of nuclear weapons must also be an important part of our discussions at this Review Conference. Two NWS

attended the Third International Conference on the Humanitarian Impact of Nuclear Weapons in Vienna last December for the first time. We hope that the focus on the humanitarian consequences of nuclear weapons and the lack of adequate responses to the use of nuclear weapons will spur greater commitment by States Parties to uphold the NPT, in particular Article VI, to reduce the risk posed by nuclear weapons to mankind.

## **Nuclear Weapon-Free Zones**

7 Singapore supports the establishment of nuclear weapon-free zones. These are concrete steps under Article VII of the NPT that helps us to strengthen global peace and security. However, the establishment of such zones must be aligned with the object and purpose of the treaties and their protocols. In this regard, we urge the NWS to sign and ratify the relevant protocols to treaties that establish nuclear weapon free zones without reservations or unilateral interpretative declarations, and to withdraw them where they exist. We also reaffirm our commitment to working closely with the NWS on the early signing and ratification of the Protocol on the Treaty on the Southeast Asia Nuclear Weapon-Free Zone without reservations.

8 The failure to convene the Conference on the establishment of a Middle East zone free of nuclear weapons and all other weapons of mass destruction has threatened to derail this Review Conference. We strongly encourage the Co-Convenors and all relevant parties to reaffirm their political support for this process at this Review Conference and strive for the convening of the Conference as soon as possible.

## **2<sup>nd</sup> Pillar: Nuclear Non-Proliferation**

9 Nuclear proliferation remains a serious threat to international peace and security. The international community must find the means to strengthen the global non-proliferation regime in practical ways that enable and facilitate states to abide by their international obligations. **First**, it is important to strengthen the IAEA's mandate and capacity in nuclear non-proliferation. The security of both civilian and non-civilian nuclear material must be enhanced. We strongly encourage all NPT States Parties which have yet to do so to conclude the IAEA Comprehensive Safeguards Agreement and Additional Protocol, and implement

their provisions without delay. **Second**, we must find a mechanism to encourage countries with nuclear weapon capabilities that remain outside the NPT to abide by the same international rules and safeguards.

10 **Third**, we must continue to find ways to address the issue of non-compliance with the Treaty. In particular, the DPRK's nuclear programme and the implications of its withdrawal from the NPT remain key issues of concern. Singapore reiterates our calls on the DPRK to return to the NPT. **Fourth**, the international community must cooperate to help countries establish a robust global export control regime to guard against illicit trafficking, without at the same time, hampering legitimate trade. As a major transshipment hub, Singapore is committed to fulfilling our counter-proliferation obligations and safeguarding our position within the global supply chain. We have also sought to share our experiences and challenges when we participate in relevant multilateral and regional initiatives, such as the Proliferation Security Initiative (PSI) and the Asian Senior Level Talks on Non-Proliferation.

### **3<sup>rd</sup> Pillar: Right to the Peaceful Uses of Nuclear Energy**

11 My delegation reaffirms the inalienable right of all States Parties to the peaceful uses of nuclear science and technology, provided under Article IV of the NPT. As more States seek to harness the benefits of nuclear technology, it is important that they reassure the international community of the peaceful nature of their nuclear programmes, and that they adhere to the relevant IAEA safety standards and safeguards. Singapore recognises the central role of the IAEA and fully supports its work in setting international norms and standards on nuclear safety and security issues.

12 Singapore also welcomes the agreement between the E3+3 and Iran on the parameters of a Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action on Iran's nuclear programme. This is an important development. However, much work remains to be done. The next stage of negotiations will be critical and we strongly urge all parties to capitalise on the positive momentum to reach a final and

comprehensive agreement by June 2015. While Iran has the right to the peaceful use of nuclear power, it must at the same time address the legitimate concerns of the international community about the nature of its nuclear programme.

## **Conclusion**

To conclude, Madam President,

13 We are at a critical juncture of the NPT. We cannot ignore the growing mistrust and polarisation between the NWS and NNWS, as well as the pessimism of many States Parties on the credibility and effectiveness of the NPT. The NPT is not perfect. But it remains a crucial instrument of the international non-proliferation regime. The dire consequences of the NPT losing relevance and credibility will ultimately be borne by all of us. But it is not too late for us to use this Review Conference for candid and constructive dialogue on the way forward and to demonstrate our collective commitment towards ensuring the relevance and credibility of the Treaty. All States Parties should therefore restate their commitment to uphold the NPT, and fulfil their respective commitments and obligations. Let us all work together to find common ground and build upon them so that we can achieve substantive and concrete outcomes at this meeting.

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