



CZECH REPUBLIC

Statement by

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at the Main Committee I

**of the 2015 Review Conference of the Parties to the Treaty
on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons**

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Mr. Chairman,

The Czech Republic endorses and supports the statement of the European Union to be delivered later during our deliberations. Allow me to touch upon some issues that are of particular importance to my country.

The Czech Republic as a non-nuclear-weapon State Party commends unilateral as well as bilateral measures aimed at achieving reductions in existing nuclear arsenals, as well as other appropriate arrangements that move the world closer to irreversible nuclear disarmament. We welcome the effort made by the P5 countries towards the elimination of nuclear weapons so far, yet there are many steps that must be made in order to achieve the vision proposed by President Obama in his speeches in Prague in 2009 and in Berlin in 2013, respectively.

The Czech Republic takes note of increasing calls of some states to pursue a comprehensive approach to nuclear weapons through the adoption of a Nuclear Weapons Convention. However, the legal ban itself would in no way guarantee elimination of the existing nuclear arsenals. Instead of simply ignoring this reality, an effective disarmament strategy should recognize that elimination of nuclear weapons is a long-term process that will require constructive and open-minded dialogue with nuclear-weapon states.

The Czech Republic is convinced that general nuclear disarmament can only be achieved if the non-proliferation regime is strengthened first. We are of the view that complete elimination of nuclear weapons can only be realized in the presence of a robust verification regime that can provide credible assurances of irreversible disarmament.

The establishment of nuclear-weapon-free zones is of particular importance to the Czech Republic, especially in the Middle East. We note with regret the delay of 2012 Helsinki Conference and reiterate our position that the establishment of the Middle East nuclear-weapon-free zone should be part of a comprehensive solution that will include the elimination of all categories of weapons of mass destruction and a peace settlement in the Middle East region. We appreciate the efforts of the Facilitator and his team in preparing the Helsinki conference, including the Glion process. We understand that the Conference is only a starting point of a long-lasting process that could bring us to a mutually acceptable solution for all parties in the Middle East region.

It is important that humanitarian dimension of nuclear disarmament has been recognised as set out in the Action Plan. The devastating immediate and long-term humanitarian impacts of a nuclear weapon detonation are of clear concern. That is why we reiterate our unwavering commitment to achieving and maintaining the goal of a world free of nuclear weapons. It is also important that all nuclear-weapon states have pledged to fully respect their existing commitments with regard to security assurances. In order to maintain and strengthen the NPT regime, a mutual confidence between nuclear-weapon states and non-nuclear-weapon states is essential.

The Czech Republic recognizes that security assurances provided by the nuclear-weapon states play an important role in strengthening the entire NPT regime. In our view it is important, especially to motivate more countries to disarm, that all assurances and commitments are subsequently duly honoured. However, the blatant violation of the Budapest memorandum by Russia casts a serious doubt on the integrity of the current non-proliferation architecture in general, and NPT in particular.

Further strengthening of the NPT architecture is particularly relevant with regard to the withdrawal provisions of the Treaty. For the Czech Republic, it is entirely unacceptable that a country would use the withdrawal provision as a way to evade sanctions and penalties for Treaty violations, and the States Parties should agree on how to collectively respond to any possible notification of a withdrawal. States Parties should remain responsible for any violation of the Treaty committed prior to withdrawal.

As a non-nuclear-weapon state, the Czech Republic will continue to fulfil its obligations under the NPT and remains committed to the full implementation of its 2010 Action Plan.

Thank you for your attention.