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STATEMENT BY

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On behalf of the Non-Proliferation and Disarmament Initiative

High-Level Meeting on Nuclear Disarmament

United Nations

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**NPDI Statement to High-Level Meeting on Disarmament
26 September 2013**

Mr Chairman

We, the Foreign Ministers of the Non-Proliferation and Disarmament Initiative (NPDI) – Australia, Canada, Chile, Germany, Japan, Mexico, the Netherlands, Poland, Turkey, the United Arab Emirates and our two new members, Nigeria and the Philippines – concerned by the threat posed to humanity, reaffirm with a sense of urgency our unwavering commitment to achieving and maintaining the shared goal of a world free of nuclear weapons.

Sustained, high-level political will is critical to achieving this goal. In this respect, we welcome the convening by President / Ambassador Ashe of this High Level Meeting on Disarmament. We express our sincere thanks to Secretary-General Ban for his active and continuing engagement on disarmament issues and to Indonesia on behalf of the NAM, for bringing this initiative forward. Due to these efforts, nuclear disarmament is suitably at the forefront of the UNGA agenda for the High Level Segment this year.

Mr Chairman

In 2010, when we established the NPDI, the international community was buoyed by the hope and expectation that grew from the successes of the 2010 NPT Review Conference, and equipped with a clear roadmap contained in the 64-point Action Plan to take the agenda forward. But as we approach the 2015 NPT Review Conference, it is clear that we, the international community, must redouble our efforts if we are to meet the challenges of Action Plan implementation.

When we consider how to progress nuclear disarmament we naturally look first to the nuclear weapon states. While disarmament is the responsibility of all states, the five NPT nuclear weapon states have particular obligations and commitments codified in Article VI of the NPT. Thus we urge them to continue working closely together. The proposal by US President Obama on 19 June in Berlin to negotiate further reductions of nuclear weapons is welcomed and should be realised. We encourage those concerned to embrace this opportunity.

We, the NPDI members, are deeply concerned about the reported build-up of nuclear arsenals by some states, against the clear intent of the international community to rid the world of nuclear weapons. In this context, we urge those not yet engaged in nuclear disarmament efforts to make a political commitment not to increase their nuclear holdings and to start reducing their arsenals with the objective of their total elimination.

As initial concrete measures, we urge all nuclear-weapon states and those states outside of the NPT to take steps towards the speedy, final and total elimination of their nuclear weapons, including : greater transparency of their nuclear arsenals; further diminishing the role and significance of nuclear weapons in their military and security concepts, doctrines and policies; de-alerting their nuclear forces to help lower the risk of inadvertent use; and reducing and

ultimately eliminating all types of nuclear weapons, both strategic and non-strategic, deployed and non-deployed, in a transparent, verifiable and irreversible manner.

Mr Chairman

We are seriously concerned by the continuing failure of established multilateral fora to fulfil their mandate in a meaningful way.

The Conference on Disarmament has not undertaken substantive work since 1998, despite the strong political will, flexibility and compromise from the vast majority of its member states. As long as even one state remains unwilling to give serious consideration to the best interests and expectations of the international community, the CD will remain deadlocked. It is time for the CD's member states to take bold steps and work towards fulfilling the CD's mandate.

It is clear that many states are seized of the importance of exploring meaningful pathways to prevent the spread of, reduce and eliminate nuclear weapons. The Open-Ended Working Group on taking forward multilateral disarmament negotiations that met successfully in Geneva, the Conference on the Humanitarian Impact of Nuclear Weapons in Oslo, the Group of Governmental Experts to be convened in 2014 to make recommendations on aspects of a Fissile Material Cut-Off Treaty and continuing efforts to encourage ratification of the CTBT are all examples of this.

We regret the postponement of the International Conference on the establishment of a zone free from nuclear weapons and other weapons of mass destruction in the Middle East. This conference should be convened without any delay, not only to move this important process forward, but also to safeguard the credibility of the NPT regime. Therefore, we call upon all the relevant states to expedite their efforts, with a spirit of cooperation and flexibility, towards the convening of the International Conference at the earliest convenience.

We also encourage all states to consider participating in the next conference on the humanitarian impact of nuclear weapons to be held in Mexico in February 2014, to continue the discussion that began in Oslo.

We would like to stress the importance of disarmament and non-proliferation education, to empower members of our societies with the necessary awareness, knowledge and skills to make their own contribution, as national and world citizens, to the realization of global disarmament and non-proliferation objectives. We welcome their contribution to the debate.

We will meet at the next NPDI Ministerial Meeting in Hiroshima in April 2014 to discuss ways to contribute to the third Preparatory Committee of the 2015 NPT Review Conference. In view of the historic significance of the location of our meeting, the catastrophic humanitarian consequences of the use of nuclear weapons will be a focus of our discussion.

As a last remark, Mr Chairman

We encourage all states to participate actively and constructively in all fora with their eyes clearly focused on practical and effective measures that will contribute to disarmament, as well as non-proliferation. We – the Ministers of the NPDI – believe that continued engagement by all

of us, as representatives of the global community, will provide the best chance of securing a safer future without nuclear weapons for all of us and for future generations.