Dear Colleagues,

I would like to express my deep gratitude to the Chair of the First Committee for giving the opportunity to address distinguished Members in my capacity as the President of the 2015 NPT Review Conference.

It is my pleasure to brief the Committee on the outcome and lessons learned from the Review Conference and to share some ideas on next steps in view of the review cycle in 2020.

The context of the 2015 Review process

The Conference was held in one of the most challenging international environments for addressing nuclear issues, among which: the on-going upheaval in the Middle East, the renewed East-West tensions, the increased and complex set of strategic relationship and arms competition in Asia Pacific. This is coupled with high expectations and, at the same time with contending visions on how to advance the NPT’s regime in 2020 -25 years after the indefinite extension and twice as long the original duration of the Treaty- without mentioning the unexpected conflicting views on the atomic bombing of Hiroshima and Nagasaki.

Against this background, intensive and coordinated efforts with Chairs of the three Main Committees, Chairs of the three Subsidiary Bodies and the team's UN Office on Disarmament Affairs, lead to a smooth conduct of procedural issues, enabling State parties to devote more time for substantive matters. Despite heavy skepticism draft final documents representing the best efforts of State parties on the backward-looking and forward-looking of the review were produced on all three pillars: disarmament, non-proliferation, access to peaceful nuclear energy, as well as on the WMD free-zone in the Middle East.

1. Step by step approach (P5) as the most effective way to achieve nuclear disarmament requiring a succession of mutually-reinforcing instruments: CTBT; a Treaty banning the production of fissile materials for nuclear arms; a universal instrument on negative assurances.
2. Additional steps such as a Convention prohibiting the use of nuclear weapons and successive rounds of negotiations between the Russian Federation and the United States.
3. The commencement of negotiations on a comprehensive nuclear weapon Convention which would provide for the total elimination of nuclear arms within a specified time frame.
4. As an outcome of the humanitarian perspective, an approach has emerged for the negotiation of a new legal instrument prohibiting nuclear weapons that would constitute an effective measure towards nuclear disarmament.
**The outcome of the 2015 review conference**

State parties reaffirmed the pivotal role of the IAEA, the importance of safeguards agreements as well as of high norms and standards aimed at strengthening the non-proliferation regime. On nuclear disarmament, I will mention the more salient recommendations agreed at the Conference going beyond the 2010 Plan of action:

**Humanitarian impact and legal gap:** for the first time, the review conference recognizes “the deep concerns pertaining to the catastrophic humanitarian consequences of any use of nuclear weapons are key factor that should continue to underpin efforts in the field of nuclear disarmament”. This introduces a new paradigm into the NPT regime implying that security issues will be addressed in conjunction with humanitarian dimension and that solutions to collective security as a problem of global impact, requires the participation of all parties not only the permanent members of the UN Security Council.

**Effective measures:** The Conference recommends to the UNGA to “establish at its 70th session, an open-ended Working Group to identify and elaborate effective measures for the full implementation of Article VI, including legal provisions that could be established through various approaches: a stand-alone instrument or a framework agreement”.

**Transparency measures and reporting:** Nuclear Weapons States are requested to provide regular reports, including on seven new measures\(^3\), on their nuclear disarmament-related undertakings and their continued engagement on a standard reporting form to the 2017 and 2019 sessions of the Preparatory Committee.

**The WMD Free-Zone in the Middle East**

The objective of the Arab Group proposal that gets the support of the Non Aligned Movement, the New Agenda Coalition, significant members of the EU and other regional Groupings, was to overcome the lack of progress since 20 years ago in the establishment of the WMD free-zone under the responsibility’s Co-sponsors of the 1995 Resolution: the United States, the Russian Federation and the United Kingdom.

The draft text submitted by the Russian Federation was discussed at the Subsidiary body II (regional issues). It reproduces main elements of the Arab proposal, in particular the one

\(^3\) i) The number, type (strategic or non strategic) and status (deployed or not deployed) of nuclear warheads; ii) the number of the type of delivery vehicles; iii) the measures taken to reducing the role and significance of nuclear weapons in military concepts, doctrines and policies; iv) the measures taken to reduce the risk of unintended, unauthorized, or accidental use of nuclear weapons; v) the measures taken to de-alert or reduce the operational readiness of nuclear weapons system; vi) the number and type of weapons and delivery systems dismantled and reduced as part of nuclear disarmament efforts; vii) the amount of fissile material for military purposes.
entrusting the UNSG: “to convene a Conference on March 1st 2016 aimed at launching a process to conclude a legally-binding Treaty establishing the long awaited Middle East Zone”.

In the absence of consensus with time running, I proposed a paper based on the discussion, reaffirming the UNSG’s role, the Co-sponsors special responsibility, the rule of consensus to all decisions related to the preparation and proceedings of the Middle East Conference. Unlikely, the President proposal was perceived as undermining the special responsibility of the Co-sponsors. All efforts lasting until the very minute of the closing session of the Conference were blocked by intransigence on the UNSG’s role that caused the collapse of the 2015 NPT Review Conference.

**Lessons learned:** The outcome of the 2015 NPT Rev.con really depends on which of the visions you subscribe to. For those who believe in the gradual approach, failure may simply reinforce what they have argued that the path towards disarmament is difficult and slow taking into consideration the international security environment. For those who believe that 45 years is long enough, failure may be taken as a sign that the non-proliferation regime is unable to deal with hard topics, such as nuclear disarmament and regional security.

This factual situation testifies of the mixed messages of State parties. I will start with the negative ones:

- Entrenched positions on key issues pertaining to nuclear disarmament with serious risks of a possible fragmentation of the review process;
- Lack of progress in the implementation of the 1995 Resolution on the Middle East causing frustrations in State parties of the region;
- Absence of a genuine bridge-builder at a time the NPT regime is at a turning point to paper over divergent views on how the regime looks like in 2020.

On the positive side:

- The Treaty is considered a legal document indispensable for collective security that provides a basis for a political process to achieve disarmament, non-proliferation and peaceful use of nuclear energy;
- The NPT review process remains an important Forum for dialogue that provides platforms for consensus building.
- Many State parties consider the 2015 final Document a useful contribution for further work in the next review cycle (2020).

**Next steps**

It is important to preserve the common understanding that the Treaty is a legal document indispensable for collective security as basis for a political process and a credible path towards nuclear disarmament.
“Business As Usual” is not the best option for the next review cycle, as State parties cannot reinvent sets of actions every five years. The failure of the Conference should be considered as a **wake-up call** for further and creative work in order to:

- Revisit the review process encompassing procedural and substantive aspects,
- Enhance the three pillars of the Treaty: nuclear disarmament, non-proliferation and access to peaceful nuclear energy,
- Implement the legally binding 1995 Resolution on the establishment of the WMD free-zone in the Middle East.

In conclusion, I believe we are not necessarily facing humanity's last sunset due to the nuclear threat. Nevertheless, the NPT regime is really under stress. Renewed and determined efforts are required to bridge the gap between expectations and achievements. At stake is the legitimacy of the Treaty, its basic fairness, its guarantee against double standards, its sustainability and its potential to make real contribution in strengthening international peace and security as well as opening up new opportunities for socio economic development.

I thank you