

UN General Assembly, 74th Session: UK Statement at the First Committee, General Debate

The United Kingdom has the honour to report to the Committee on the state of play in the P5 Process of dialogue between the five Nuclear Weapon States recognised by the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty – China, France, the Russian Federation, the United Kingdom, and the United States – as the co-ordinator of that Process for 2019/20. The UK assumed that role following the third meeting of the Preparatory Committee for the 2020 NPT Review Conference in May, after China's productive co-ordination of the Process in 2018/19. We express our sincere gratitude to China for their efforts during that time.

Mr Chair

Let me first once again reaffirm the commitment of all five of the Nuclear Weapon States to the NPT, in all its aspects, as we approach the fiftieth anniversary of its entry into force in 2020.

This landmark Treaty has provided the essential foundation for international efforts to stem the threat that nuclear weapons would spread across the globe, and has thereby limited the risk of nuclear war. It has provided the framework within which the peaceful uses of nuclear technology –for electricity, medicine, agriculture and industry, for example – could be promoted and shared, to the benefit of humanity. And by helping to ease international tensions and create conditions of stability, security and trust among nations, it has allowed for a vital and continuing contribution to nuclear disarmament and non-proliferation.

We remain committed under the Treaty to the pursuit of good faith negotiations on effective measures related to nuclear disarmament, and on a treaty on general and complete disarmament under strict and effective international control. We support the ultimate goal of a world without nuclear weapons with undiminished security for all. We are committed to working to ease international tension, which will be conducive to further progress on nuclear disarmament.

We pledge our full and continued support for the work of the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA), which plays a critical role in NPT implementation, both in promoting the fullest possible cooperation on the peaceful uses of nuclear technology and in applying safeguards and verifying that nuclear programmes are exclusively for peaceful purposes. We emphasise the need to further strengthen the IAEA safeguards system, including the universalisation of the Additional Protocol.

We urge all States to commit to the continued success of the NPT: to ensure compliance, to promote universalisation, to ensure the highest standards of non-proliferation, and to respond to ongoing and emerging proliferation

challenges, wherever they occur. In this context our five countries reiterate our commitment to continue our individual and collective efforts within the NPT framework to advance nuclear disarmament goals and objectives.

Mr Chair

In that spirit, the Principals of the P5 delegations met in New York on 8 October to discuss prospects for the NPT Review Conference, and the contribution the P5 could collectively make to its success.

We had an in-depth exchange of views on the strategic security environment, and on the key issues facing the NPT in all its aspects at its Review Conference next year.

We also reviewed progress on the five areas of work agreed at our last meeting at this level, under the co-ordination of China, in the margins of the third PrepCom.

First, we reaffirmed the importance of in-depth dialogue on our respective nuclear doctrines and policies, for enhancing both mutual trust and confidence between the five Nuclear Weapon States, and the transparency of our nuclear doctrines with respect to the wider NPT community. We welcomed the productive discussions that have taken place between officials from P5 Defence and Foreign Ministries, and agreed that they should continue. We also discussed ways in which the P5 could work together on strategic nuclear risk reduction. We restated our commitment to present on our nuclear doctrines at a side event at the 2020 Review Conference. Second, we reviewed our engagement with the ASEAN countries on the Protocol to the Treaty establishing a South-East Asia Nuclear Weapons Free Zone, which we agreed to continue. We welcomed the constructive meeting between P5 delegations and the Secretary-General of ASEAN in Geneva on 25 June, and the renewed commitment by the ASEAN Foreign Ministers Meeting in Bangkok on 31 July to ongoing discussions with the Nuclear Weapon States on this issue.

Third, we welcomed China's ongoing leadership of the second phase of work on the Glossary of Key Nuclear Terms. The Glossary is both a valuable contribution to the technical basis for arms control and disarmament, and an important tool for promoting mutual understanding. Two meetings of the expert-level working group have been held in Beijing since the third PrepCom, and another is scheduled for December.

Fourth, we commended the discussions that have taken place between P5 delegations in Vienna on ways to strengthen our co-operation on the peaceful use of nuclear energy, nuclear security and nuclear safety in the run-up to next year's Review Conference.

Fifth, we welcomed France's initiative to convene a first meeting of P5 experts on FMCT-related technical issues in Paris on 19 September, and looked forward to further discussions at that level that would contribute to efforts to make progress on an FMCT at the Conference on Disarmament.

Noting the publication by China and the UK of draft NPT National

Implementation Reports at the third PrepCom, we also reaffirmed the commitment of all our countries to submit national reports to the 2020 Review Conference, once again using the common template agreed in 2013. We appreciate our continuing dialogue with the countries of the Non-Proliferation and Disarmament Initiative, which continued with a meeting on 9 October.

Finally, Mr Chair, we committed ourselves to continuing and deepening our dialogue and our collective work, with the aim of promoting a successful Review Conference in 2020. We will meet again in London in February 2020 for the ninth P5 Conference