

2020 Review Conference of the Parties to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons

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Ministerial Statement of the French Republic, the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland, and the United States of America

Submitted by the French Republic, the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland, and the United States of America*

1. For more than fifty years, the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty (NPT) has been an irreplaceable and vital component of a global rules-based order. We reaffirm the NPT as the cornerstone of the nuclear non-proliferation regime and as the foundation for the pursuit of nuclear disarmament and peaceful uses of nuclear technology. We recall our enduring efforts to reduce nuclear risks in furtherance of our nuclear disarmament obligations under Article VI of the NPT.
2. As the Tenth NPT Review Conference begins, we reaffirm its continued importance, and pledge to work positively toward the full implementation of all provisions and the full realization of its purposes. Among them is the furtherance of international peace and security, which we, as NPT nuclear-weapon states and Permanent Members of the UN Security Council, are committed to preserving and promoting.
3. The leaders of France, the United Kingdom, and the United States remain firmly committed to the objectives contained in the statement of 3 January 2022 on Preventing Nuclear War and Avoiding Arms Races. We recognize and act with a deep understanding that nuclear war cannot be won and must never be fought. We affirm the aspiration and high stakes associated with preserving the record of non-use of nuclear weapons since 1945. Nuclear weapons, for as long as they exist, should serve defensive purposes, deter aggression, and prevent war. We condemn those who would use or threaten to use nuclear weapons for military coercion, intimidation, and blackmail. Such actions are profoundly dangerous and contrary to the purposes of the NPT and the UN Charter. Following Russia's unprovoked and unlawful war of aggression against Ukraine, we call on Russia to cease its irresponsible and dangerous nuclear rhetoric and behaviour, to uphold its international commitments, and to recommit – in words and deeds – to the principles enshrined in the recent Preventing Nuclear War and Avoiding Arms Races Leaders' statement.

* The present document is being issued without formal editing.



4. The NPT has reduced the risk of a devastating nuclear war, and further reduction of that risk must be a priority for all NPT states parties and for this Review Conference. We recognize that this risk is best addressed through concrete, substantive and purposeful steps and overcoming the strategic, political, and technical challenges necessary to achieve a world without nuclear weapons. The working paper we submitted describes principles and responsibilities of responsible practices for NPT Nuclear Weapon States, and illustrates ways in which our governments will carry forward implementation of the January 3rd statement.

5. By mandating ever stronger nuclear safeguards, implemented by the International Atomic Energy Agency to verify non-proliferation undertakings, we recall that the NPT has laid the necessary basis for preventing the spread of nuclear weapons and for the secure sharing of nuclear technology for peaceful purposes. The potential for further contributions in the fields of energy, agriculture, health, environment and other fields is vast. We renew our commitment to promote and expand their contribution to sustainable development and tackling climate change around the world.

6. Previous Review Conferences, and the commitments we have made to each other, have advanced these common goals, and those commitments remain important. Our governments have endeavoured, and will continue to endeavour, to implement those commitments. At the Tenth Review Conference, we must also continue to look forward, to identify the most pressing tasks to advance all three pillars of the treaty: disarmament, non-proliferation and peaceful uses of nuclear energy, science, and technology. Each pillar represents a shared interest of all NPT Parties, to which all can contribute.

7. We are fully aware of the difficulties we face, and of the challenges recent events have posed to all three of those pillars. This month, our words, our actions, and the common ground we build must all reinforce the global norms that derive from this Treaty and that protect us all. This requires that we join in rejecting irresponsible nuclear rhetoric and reckless attacks endangering nuclear reactors and associated peaceful nuclear facilities. All NPT Parties, nuclear-weapon States or non-nuclear-weapon States, have a duty both to demonstrate and to promote responsible behaviour and restraint in meeting their obligations. We recall, in this regard, our negative and positive security assurances to NPT non-nuclear-weapon states and will honour such assurances.

8. We are committed to addressing regional proliferation crises wherever they arise. We reiterate that Iran must never develop a nuclear weapon. We regret that, despite intense diplomatic efforts, Iran has yet to seize the opportunity to restore full implementation of the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action (JCPOA). We urge Iran to return to full implementation of the JCPOA and UNSCR 2231 and to cooperate on an urgent basis with the IAEA in resolving questions related to possible undeclared nuclear material and activities in Iran as required under its NPT-required safeguards agreement. We further note that continued advances in the DPRK's nuclear and missile programs pose a growing threat to our common security. We remain committed to complete, verifiable, and irreversible dismantlement by the DPRK of all its nuclear weapons and call on the DPRK to cease all nuclear tests and launches that use ballistic missile technology and related activities as required under multiple UN Security Council resolutions.

9. During this Review Conference, we will examine closely and debate honestly all proposals for advancing implementation of the Treaty. In this spirit, we pledge our best efforts to uphold international law, norms and institutions and to reach a positive, consensus outcome that will make all States and all their peoples more prosperous and more secure.