

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

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De-alerting

Working paper submitted by the members of the Non-Proliferation and Disarmament Initiative (Australia, Canada, Chile, Germany, Japan, Mexico, the Netherlands, Nigeria, the Philippines, Poland, Turkey and the United Arab Emirates)

1. As stated in our working paper submitted to the 2015 Review Conference of the Parties to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons, the 2000 Review Conference of the Parties to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons, in its consensus final document, included in its 13 practical steps towards nuclear disarmament the need for “concrete agreed measures to further reduce the operational status of nuclear weapons systems”.
2. Action 5 of the action plan adopted at the 2010 Review Conference of the Parties to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons further highlighted the importance of de-alerting nuclear weapons. It called for nuclear-weapon States to “commit to accelerate concrete progress” on the 13 practical steps agreed at the 2000 Review Conference. It specifically called upon nuclear-weapon States to “consider the legitimate interest of non-nuclear-weapon States in further reducing the operational status of nuclear weapons systems in ways that promote international stability and security” (action 5 (e)) and to “reduce the risk of accidental use of nuclear weapons” (action 5 (f)).
3. The issue of de-alerting is also closely related to the other aims found in the action plan. For example, de-alerting may provide a much-needed boost to disarmament efforts (action 5 (a)) and help to further diminish the role and significance of nuclear weapons in military and security concepts, doctrines and policies (action 5 (c)).
4. As expressed in our ministerial statement of 12 April 2014, de-alerting nuclear forces is also important, not only as a step towards a world free of nuclear weapons but also to avoid and reduce the risk of catastrophic humanitarian consequences from any unauthorized or accidental use of nuclear weapons.
5. A lowered operational readiness for nuclear weapons systems would demonstrate a commitment to reducing the role of nuclear weapons in security and



defence doctrines. It would also be a valuable confidence-building measure and an important step towards nuclear disarmament.

6. We are deeply concerned by the recent deterioration of the international security climate and the reported build-up of nuclear capacities by some States. We are further concerned about calls for the use or threat of use of nuclear weapons that are detrimental to the international security environment; we therefore call upon all nuclear-weapon States to take further steps to eliminate their nuclear arsenals in accordance with article VI of the Treaty.

7. We therefore:

(a) Urge all nuclear-weapon States to take concrete and meaningful steps, whether unilaterally, bilaterally or regionally, to implement actions 5 (e) and 5 (f) in the action plan adopted at the 2010 Review Conference;

(b) Call upon all nuclear-weapon States to provide an update to States parties to the Treaty on efforts that they have undertaken to implement actions 5 (e) and 5 (f);

(c) Emphasize that de-alerting nuclear forces would be a valuable confidence-building measure in the current international security climate and that it is also important to avoid and reduce the risk of catastrophic humanitarian consequences from any unauthorized, unintentional or accidental use of nuclear weapons;

(d) Highlight the importance of nuclear-armed States that are not parties to the Treaty also taking steps towards de-alerting their nuclear forces.
