

Conference on Disarmament

24 March 2020

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Note Verbale dated 10 March 2020 from the Permanent Mission of Belarus, transmitting Statement by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Belarus on the occasion of the 50th anniversary of the entry into force of the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons

The Permanent Mission of the Republic of Belarus to the United Nations Office and other International Organizations in Geneva presents its compliments to the Secretariat of the Conference on Disarmament and has the honour to request the Secretariat to circulate among the States — Members of the Conference the enclosed Statement by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Belarus on the occasion of the 50th anniversary of the entry into force of the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons, as well as to issue it as an official document of the Conference on Disarmament.

The Permanent Mission of the Republic of Belarus to the United Nations Office and other International Organizations in Geneva avails itself of this opportunity to renew to the Secretariat of the Conference on Disarmament the assurances of its highest consideration.



Annex

Statement by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Belarus on the occasion of the 50th anniversary of the entry into force of the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons

March 5, 2020 marks the 50th anniversary of the entry into force of the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT).

The NPT is a fundamental element not only of the nuclear non-proliferation regime but of the entire architecture of international security and strategic stability. Confirmation of the significance of the Treaty was its indefinite extension in 1995.

The NPT, which today unites the vast majority of countries of the world and is genuinely universal, for the first time legally enshrined the obligation of nuclear states not to transfer or control nuclear weapons to anyone. At the same time, it obligated non-nuclear states not to accept nuclear weapons, not to produce or acquire them in any other way, nor to seek and accept any assistance in their production. The NPT also guaranteed the inalienable right of states to implement peaceful nuclear programs, subject to the fulfillment of non-proliferation obligations.

Belarus is a consistent supporter of nuclear disarmament and non-proliferation processes. The Republic of Belarus joined the Treaty in 1993, becoming the first state in the post-Soviet space to renounce voluntarily the possession of nuclear weapons without any preconditions and reservations.

The refusal of Belarus, Ukraine and Kazakhstan from nuclear weapons radically changed the dynamics of geopolitical processes in the nuclear field and opened the way for new steps in the field of nuclear disarmament, which we witnessed in subsequent years.

Today, expectations of progress in nuclear disarmament are much more moderate, and hopes are cautious. Against the backdrop of growing mistrust and aggravating contradictions between states, the nuclear non-proliferation regime is facing numerous risks and challenges. Decisive steps are needed to strengthen the NPT in order to achieve the objectives stipulated by the Treaty.

Belarus proceeds from the fact that the obligation of the states enshrined in the NPT to negotiate nuclear disarmament is one of the strategic goals of the Treaty, advocates a balanced and step-by-step approach to this process, giving it a multilateral and irreversible character. A special role and responsibility in this matter, undoubtedly, should belong to nuclear-weapon states.

At the same time, the comprehensive implementation of Article VI of the NPT, which provides, inter alia, steps for general and complete disarmament, is impossible without overcoming confrontation, restoring atmosphere of trust and joint concerted actions by all members of the international community without exception.

The NPT Review Conference conducted every five years will be held in New York in April-May 2020, where a comprehensive review of the Treaty's functioning will be held. Belarus aims at constructive work during this forum and the adoption of decisions aimed at increasing the viability of the NPT and strengthening the global nuclear non-proliferation regime.
