

## **REDUCING THE RISK OF NUCLEAR CONFLICT**

### **JOINT STATEMENT 2ND Session NPT PrepCom**

**Geneva, 2 August 2024**

Mr. Chair,

I am taking the floor on behalf of Argentina, Australia, Brazil, Canada, Finland, France, Germany, Ghana, Ireland, Japan, Kazakhstan, Mexico, the Philippines, Sweden, the Republic of Korea, Thailand, the United Kingdom, the United States and my own country, Switzerland. We reaffirm our commitment to reducing the risk of nuclear conflict.

Risk reduction is in no way a substitute for nuclear disarmament, nor should it in any way detract from disarmament efforts. To the contrary, pending the elimination of nuclear weapons, risk reduction goes hand in hand with the need to realize Article VI goals and contributes to our enduring interest in the prevention of nuclear war.

Avoiding escalation and reducing risks of nuclear weapons use is a matter of urgency in the current deteriorating security environment.

While pursuing nuclear disarmament goals under the NPT and respecting legitimate interests of non-nuclear weapon states, nuclear weapon states bear the primary responsibility in preventing nuclear conflict. At the same time, all NPT States Parties must play an active role in promoting nuclear disarmament and contributing to reducing risks of nuclear weapon use. These efforts can include measures to enhance trust, promote transparency, and advance nuclear disarmament.

NPT States Parties have long recognized the imperative to reduce the risks of nuclear conflict. Indeed, the preamble to the NPT opens with the words “considering the devastation that would be visited upon all mankind by a nuclear war and the consequent need to avert the danger of such war and to take measures to safeguard the security of peoples.” States Parties called for measures to minimize the risk that nuclear weapons are ever used in both the 2000 NPT Practical Steps and the 2010 NPT Action Plan.

Preventing the risk of nuclear conflict and arms races and promoting further progress in nuclear disarmament are our primary objectives. We seek to support the urgent development of concrete, credible, and practical measures that could reduce the risk of nuclear weapon use, and move States from dialogue to action, from proposals to implementation. This should be an objective of all nuclear weapon states. All nuclear weapon states have in the recent past highlighted the need to pursue strategic risk reduction measures and substantive bilateral and multilateral dialogues on the subject, as evidenced by the 2022 Joint Statement of the Leaders of the Five Nuclear-Weapon States on Preventing Nuclear War and Avoiding Arms Races and the strategic risk reduction working paper submitted by the nuclear-weapon States in 2021.

There is a rich tradition of unilateral, bilateral, and multilateral risk reduction measures, ranging from transparency and communication, restraint on doctrines and deployment, to negative security assurances and negotiations on nuclear arms control and disarmament. These measures helped to prevent nuclear war for decades, and we need to ensure they are being implemented by all relevant actors today.

We simultaneously reaffirm our unwavering commitment to implementing Article VI of the NPT and continued efforts towards nuclear disarmament, including through reciprocal and verifiable agreements, with a view to promoting international peace and security.