



CZECH REPUBLIC

Permanent Mission of the Czech Republic to the United Nations

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**First Committee Thematic Debate
Nuclear Weapons Cluster**

Statement by

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Chair,

Czechia fully aligns itself with the statement delivered by the European Union.

My delegation has already shared a number of concerns relevant to the Nuclear Weapons cluster in our statement in the General Debate. We have addressed Russia's aggression against Ukraine, the precarious situation of the Zaporizhzhya Power Plant resulting from Russian occupation, as well as our concern at China's lack of transparency on its nuclear arsenals, Iran's lack of cooperation with the IAEA on unresolved safeguards issues, and the DPRK's disregard of UNSC resolutions.

We will therefore not repeat all of those now, but rather focus on some additional elements.

Many countries have spoken critically at the First Committee, including in this debate, on the slow progress in nuclear disarmament. We genuinely sympathise with their frustration. Czechia, too, would wish to exist in a world free of nuclear weapons, and it remains our goal in accordance with Art. VI of the NPT. Unfortunately, Russia's behaviour over the past two decades, culminating with the full-scale military invasion of Ukraine, simply does not allow countries in Europe to feel safe. It therefore cannot come as a surprise that the prospect of NATO membership, including its nuclear deterrence, becomes more attractive than ever to a number of countries, including Ukraine. A direct attack by Russia on its neighbour, whose sovereignty and security it pledged to respect through its signature on the Budapest Memorandum from 1994, has taught us all a grave lesson. We invite especially the non-European countries to consider the impact of the Russian aggression also from this angle. No doubt that the negative consequences on the prospect of nuclear disarmament are enormous and will be long-lasting.

It is regrettable that the international disarmament architecture continues to deteriorate, as visible on the example of the New START treaty. We regret Russia's purported suspension of the New START treaty and its preceding failure to honour the legal obligations vis-à-vis verification mechanism under the Treaty. The New START treaty remains in the security interest of all States. We therefore call on all concerned to act responsibly and engage constructively, in order to revive the downward stockpile trajectory, in line with Article VI of the NPT.

Mr. Chair,

The dismal security circumstances must not weaken our resolve to uphold the existing disarmament and non-proliferation architecture.

We have just entered a new Review Cycle of the NPT. The First PrepCom was preceded by a Working Group mandated to seek ways on how to strengthen the review process. We were heartened by the level of cross-regional engagement towards a shared goal, especially during the Working Group meetings. It is very regrettable, and indeed disappointing, that one delegation blocked the Chair from submitting a summary of the deliberations, in his own capacity and compliant with long-established multilateral practice, to the Second Preparatory Committee. We nevertheless commend Ambassador Viinanen on the fair

conduct of the PrepCom and Working Group proceedings. We trust that his summary will serve as a useful basis for all of us next year in Geneva, under the skilled leadership of Ambassador Rakhmetullin.

With regard to the IAEA, we fully support the IAEA safeguards system, which should be further, strengthened. We therefore call on all remaining NPT States Parties that have not yet done so to ratify and bring into force their Comprehensive Safeguards Agreements and Additional Protocols without any further delay. The focus of the Agency on mandated activities should continue. The Agency is the competent body to ensure full, impartial, independent and objective implementation of safeguards. We therefore observe with growing unease the demands by some delegations to put the AUKUS project more prominently on the Agency's agenda. AUKUS is a matter for the standard safeguards system in due course. In the same vein, we fully support the Agency's mandate in the field of nuclear safety and refuse the accusations surrounding the discharge of the ALPS treated water from Fukushima Power Station. We have full trust in the expert assessment by the Agency and appreciate the continued provision of information from the Government of Japan.

Concerning the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty (CTBT), we encourage those States that have not yet signed or ratified it to do so, thus complementing the international security architecture in accordance with the NPT. We are very concerned by the announced intention of the Russian Duma to revoke its ratification of the CTBT. If pursued, it would be yet another step in the wrong direction in the disarmament domain, which is already under enormous strain.

Lastly, we regret that the commencement of negotiations of the Fissile Material Cut-off Treaty (FMCT) remains long overdue and we encourage those concerned to respect a moratorium on the production of fissile material for nuclear weapons or other explosive devices.

Thank you, Chair.