

**STATEMENT BY AMBASSADOR ABDUL SAMAD MINTY ON BEHALF OF SOUTH AFRICA, SUBSIDIARY BODY 1, 13 MAY 2015**

Chairperson,

South Africa wishes to thank you for your efforts reflected in the revised draft report, which serves as a good basis for our further consideration. In this regard, we all need to work together to ensure that the forward looking aspects are integrated into the main document.

South Africa associates with the statements of the New Agenda Coalition and the Non Aligned Movement, together with the points made by Austria and many other delegations, along the same lines.

Chairperson,

In my statement, I will deal with certain concepts and ideas and not necessarily propose specific wording with regard to the document before us.

We must not forget that there are great expectations for the 2015 Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty (NPT) Review Conference. We must have an outcome that is 2010 Plus and not simply a rollover of the 2010 Action Plan.

Chairperson,

With regard to a new proposed language on extending the 70 year record of non-use of nuclear weapons, we believe that this is insufficient, as it makes no mention of the need to prohibit nuclear weapons, which have been called for over these decades. We cannot accept this, given that during this period we have often been on the brink of dangerous situations. Indeed, what is so commendable about this long period of non-use, during which we have retained probably the worst and most destructive of all weapons of mass destruction? Whilst we have outlawed other weapons of mass destruction, including chemical and biological, nuclear weapons are the only weapons that we have retained and modernised and which continue to present a threat to humanity as whole. How do we continue to justify the retention of these weapons?

Such an approach makes nonsense of the 1995 and 2000 Review Conference decisions and the many other decisions, which constitute the NPT regime. It certainly makes nonsense of the South African proposal in 1995 to extend the Treaty indefinitely based on the historic bargain that NWS will disarm, whilst others will not proliferate. It makes nonsense of the 2000 Review Conference, together with many other agreements. Many of us also cannot forget the commitment made, not so long ago, to Global Zero and the Prague statement, which inspired so many of us. Since Hiroshima and Nagasaki, there was so much hope that we were moving in the right

direction with this commitment to try to find a solution to rescue humanity from this peril. However, even this commitment was regrettably later qualified by statements to the effect that we could not expect nuclear disarmament 'in our lifetime'.

Throughout the years since Hiroshima and Nagasaki, there has been urgency for nuclear disarmament and the total elimination of all nuclear weapons. We therefore should not allow statements welcoming the fact that nuclear weapons have not been used for seventy years to distort the global reality - because the reality is very different to what is being conveyed. The aspirations of the global community must be heard. The recent Conferences on the Humanitarian Impact of Nuclear Weapons and other events must be taken into account in determining how we respond to this global danger that we collectively face.

The phrase calling for the non-use of nuclear weapons 'forever' in the revised paragraph seems to indicate some among us wish to retain these nuclear arsenals indefinitely. This is an extremely disingenuous and dangerous concept, because if you say that as long as you have nuclear weapons, you should be able to use them, then we who do not have nuclear weapons have a right to ask under what circumstances would you be prepared to use these nuclear weapons?

If there are those that wish to retain their weapons and propose the removal of concepts such as 'they should not be used under any circumstances', then they have a clear responsibility to persuade us, who will all be victims, 'under what circumstances' they will indeed use them. As such, the statement regarding the 70 years of non-use can best be described as a complacent approach, which cannot be countenanced any longer. If we make reference to this, what does this then mean for the commitments made by many leaders to eliminate nuclear weapons? We should instead be saying that despite these calls, we have failed in our supreme responsibility to all of humanity, which all of us hold.

If we seek to remove 'under any circumstances', then the question is why do those that have them still want to assert their right to use them under some circumstances. We therefore ask, under what circumstances do they still want to use them? What kind of threats do they want to counter? If they perceive a certain type of threat, how do they want to use their nuclear weapons to overcome that particular threat? We are all part of the same world and so we have a right to ask these questions.

The wider question then becomes, who gives the nuclear weapons States (NWS) the right to use these weapons to annihilate all of us - simply because their perceptions may be wrong, or they may be reacting to perceived threats, which do not exist to the magnitude that they assess? How do we correct this perception? At which venue or forum are we prepared to discuss those security threats that affect all of us? We simply leave this to the countries that have nuclear weapons to determine on behalf of all of us, when they should use nuclear weapons and to justify this use in

advance, although they do not make clear under what circumstances they are prepared to use such weapons.

Chairperson,

The other element that is consistent, certainly over the four decades that we have been discussing this issue, is those that want to keep their nuclear weapons claim that they need it for their security. This is an evolving and subjective perception, as this notion of security is not defined and the NWS simply hide behind the statement that they need these weapons for their security.

We need to interact with the NWS, since they need to be honest with us as to whether there are other ways to provide them with the security that they seek, rather than their over-dependence on nuclear weapons. How can we all put our own fate at risk, because of potentially incorrect or subjective perceptions of some 'security concerns'? What are the criteria for working out this security standard? Indeed, what is the framework in which they have this security concern?

This is why some of us suggested in the Plenary at the 2010 Review Conference - which was later reflected in the conclusions - that we would not just like the two major NWS to discuss reductions, but we would like all five NWS to engage each other, so as to create a greater balance in the global community. If there is concern about security or insecurity arising from the policies of powerful countries and the strengths of adversaries who are NWS, then it should be possible in the context of the five to engage each other to reduce risks and for all five to commit not to use nuclear weapons, under any circumstances and then to commence the dismantling process. The five have a supreme responsibility to address this matter on behalf of humanity.

The other argument linked to security, is the concept of deterrence. Who is to be deterred? We were consistently told by the five that deterrence was directed amongst themselves, particularly with the great rivalry during the Cold War and subsequently more recently the tensions, which have emerged in the present global situation. So in this context, how is this deterrent role to be worked out? Do the NWS watch each other and find out what they think others are developing and what weapons they are modernising? Do they look at the number of bases or alliances that are being formed with others – both nuclear possessing States outside of the NPT and non-nuclear weapons States (NNWS) - which place nuclear weapons at the centre of their defence doctrines? Is it on this basis that the NWS then work out their deterrence policies, honestly and truthfully? What is the deterrence role in relation to countries in the five? Whilst we recognise that there are some countries outside of the NPT that possess nuclear weapons, this does not reduce the responsibility of the five to work with all of us that are members of the NPT.

So far the five have made progress on the glossary, which may be an important first step, since they were not working together in the past. Having produced the glossary

in this five year period, how long will it take them to discuss other issues? Even if they do not disclose their intentions with respect to deterrence, they should be working very hard on this matter, instead of making general statements about their security needs. Ultimately, the security considerations of the five are unilateral and imposed on all of us, without us knowing the details from each of the NWS.

If for security reasons the five feel that they must be armed with nuclear weapons, what about other countries, in similar situations? Do we think that the global situation is such that no other country would ever aspire to nuclear weapons to provide security for themselves, when the five tell us that it is absolutely correct to possess nuclear weapons for their security? Is this not a way to increase proliferation? How do we decide the needs of others, who want nuclear weapons to preserve their security? Is it the case that we all recognise that they will never need nuclear weapons for their security? If the five are saying that for the rest of us, you will never need nuclear weapons for your security, what is so unique about their security situation that makes it imperative for them to be the only countries that have the right to have nuclear weapons for their security? Who in the end will decide who should have nuclear weapons and who should not? If it is to be only the NWS, then we know from human experience that it is very rare in history that those with total power have voluntarily given up that power. In this case if the five had mistakenly believed that their security rests on the possession of nuclear weapons and the possibility to use them under certain circumstances, then it is an extremely dangerous world that they are creating for all of us.

Why is it that only the security of the five requires nuclear weapons, whilst no one else needs nuclear weapons for their security? If the truth is that no one's security needs nuclear weapons, then all of our security is enhanced by getting rid of nuclear weapons. If this is indeed the case, what makes it so different for the five that they feel that they have to be exempted from this universal truth?

Chairperson,

The other aspect that has continually bedevilled our discussions since 1995 and beyond, is whether reductions amount to disarmament. Whenever NNWS demand movement towards nuclear disarmament, we are faced with details about reductions. Yet the reductions essentially amount to surplus stock or are old weapons that are to be dispensed with where new weapons have been developed, making it unnecessary to retain the old ones. In the case of some countries, this also comes at a very high cost, which is associated with the development of new nuclear weapons. We welcome reductions, since none of us want such significant quantities of nuclear arsenals.

However, reductions and nuclear disarmament are two different concepts. The concept of reduction means that we do not need so many and therefore we will reduce some. The concept of nuclear disarmament means that we must carve out a

path for the total elimination of nuclear weapons. Similarly, when we refer to step by step, since 1995 many of the steps that have been taken have actually been backwards. It is important not to move backwards and claim that you are in fact moving forward, as the danger remains even despite the number of nuclear weapons having been reduced. There is no automatic security that we create with numbers, except the fact that if you have too many, you can make more mistakes and have greater risks.

If nuclear disarmament is the direction and in this so-called roadmap this is the path that NWS are taking, they need to tell us, what roadmap they are working on? How fast are they going on this road? At what rate they are travelling and how long will it take to reach the destination? Do they need some fuel from us to make them go faster or are they taking rest-stops along the way, or are they simply lost? The misuse of the 2010 outcome as a roadmap seems to give licence to an approach, which suggests that they have an indefinite right to possess nuclear weapons. It further suggests that if they get tired of talking to each other, then they take a rest-stop, whilst they are armed with the most dangerous weapons.

The five should, as I said earlier, work together with all of us to determine the timelines, the framework or the context within which all nuclear weapons will be eliminated. We are not naïve to say that you can put an automatic date to the conclusion of this process or that there are no obstacles on the road. Anything worth achieving has to overcome such obstacles together with the NNWS, because we all have a shared interest in peace and security in our own world.

Whilst acknowledging these reductions, we would like them to be speeded up even more. We do not conceive reductions as amounting to nuclear disarmament. From the point of view of South Africa's experience, at the dawn of our freedom, the apartheid regime decided to get rid of their nuclear weapons, because they were extremely dangerous. If South Africa had adopted the path of reductions, would that have been welcomed by the world as a very great step? Yet if South Africa had done so, we would have simply been following the example of the NWS. This is clearly an extremely dangerous argument.

If we are to look at the roadmap and claim that reductions are the way to nuclear disarmament, then when will we reach that destination? Is it so elusive that none of the NWS know when we will reach it? Or is that a secret that cannot be shared with us, despite its centrality to increasing our own security? Are the drivers of those very goals in perpetual motion to nowhere or are they standing still? It does not help to simply talk of a roadmap where NWS do not know where they are going or if they are perhaps lost?

Chairperson,

There is a reference in paragraph 7 to the NWS and the annual reports they need to submit. This paragraph, however, is incomplete unless it also refers to the NNWS

that enjoy nuclear security arrangements, which are currently exempted from reporting on the state of their arrangements. We certainly do not want to be in a world where new dangers are constantly seen by certain countries as a motivation to join a nuclear weapon umbrella as this extends the danger even further. These States should therefore also be called upon, together with the NWS, to not only account for the weapons that are located on their territory, as the 2010 decision says, but they should also report on other arrangements that may be in existence, be they through alliances or other relationships.

It is important to really look at the reality on the ground. We have to look at the NWS and the umbrella States, and if all of them have security concerns, and more States join the umbrella or the tent, then what kind of future do we hold for ourselves?

Chairperson,

We need to talk about a legally binding framework. This is not to say that such a framework could be agreed at this Conference, nor implemented immediately. However, we need to discuss how to create that framework, because we are all in the same world and we suffer the same destiny as a result of the actions of some of us.

We currently face the prospect of this Conference coming to a close without consensus on this important matter. While we work towards consensus, some continue to divide us by using the notion of consensus to make us surrender to their wishes or risk putting the whole outcome in jeopardy. However, there are two things that are required to secure consensus. Whilst you need agreement, you need to get to an agreement through exercising some level of flexibility. If the NWS show no flexibility, then there can be no outcome that reflects the wishes of all members of the NPT. It is extremely important to recognise that all of us have a share in what comes out.

Looking back over the last twenty years of five-year reviews, we seem to view these as five-year roll-overs with nothing much happening regarding nuclear disarmament. This approach raises questions about the prospects for this Treaty. Increasingly the public will begin to look at the Treaty in effect as a NWS Treaty. This statement is made with caution and with a real sense of dread, because should this happen, we will have to answer to millions of those outside this room.

Chairperson,

When South Africa put forward the proposal for the indefinite extension of the NPT, we did not think that twenty years on, we would remain in the very same place as far as nuclear disarmament was concerned. If we look back on this period, we simply see agreements being reached and then soon after, some of the five walk away from these agreements, when the ink is hardly dry. So what are we to do with these kinds of agreements? What has happened to the 1995 agreement? What has happened

to the 2000 outcome and other outcomes that we have had? Why do some still talk as if we do not have such agreements? Why do some only refer to certain aspects of the Treaty and not to the NPT regime as a whole.

The question is when will we ever get nuclear disarmament? It is certainly the most neglected pillar of the Treaty where we urgently need forward movement. The NPT is not like a menu at a restaurant where NWS can decide what it is that they are going to eat. They seem to be very allergic to their commitment or addicted to nuclear weapons, since they seemingly cannot do without them. If you approach the NPT like a menu, where you simply select what you want, then what does this mean for the legal obligations that we all entered into together? Is it that some pillars are not to be touched, whilst others are to be strengthened and imposed on the rest of us? Does this therefore mean that the NPT provisions are not binding on all of us?

Chairperson,

We hope very much that the NWS will engage amongst themselves and will come out of this enclosure within which they are seemingly trapped with their nuclear weapons. We certainly have to try to help them to overcome this. We have to reach a common destination and we need to decide whether we are still on the same road or whether the NWS are on another path? We need to encourage them to drive further on the same journey as us, so that collectively we can reach our common destination.

There is a very big gap between the NNWS and NWS. Yet the NNWS represent the vast majority of humanity – our lives, our future and our destiny is wrapped up with the arsenal of the NWS. Can we narrow the gap at this Conference? Is there the political will on the part of the NWS to move towards the NNWS so as to meet our demands for a peaceful world and the elimination of nuclear weapons. We hope that they will demonstrate that they will move in accordance with the NPT provisions, so that we can look at the NPT as a Treaty that protects us all.

I thank you