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Statement on behalf of the European Union

by

**H.E. Catherine Ashton
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Foreign Affairs and Security Policy**

**at the General Debate of the Review Conference of
the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT)**

United Nations

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- CHECK AGAINST DELIVERY -

I have the honour to speak on behalf of the European Union. The Candidate Countries Croatia* and the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia*, the Countries of the Stabilisation and Association Process and potential candidates Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina and Montenegro as well as Ukraine and the Republic of Moldova align themselves with this declaration.

I would like, first of all, to congratulate you on your appointment as President of this 2010 Review Conference of the Parties to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT). We are aware of the numerous informal consultations you have yourself undertaken in preparation for this conference and commend your work in this regard. We are ready to support you in all possible ways in your efforts to achieve a substantive and balanced outcome at this Review Conference.

Mr. President,

The NPT, based on the three mutually reinforcing pillars of non-proliferation, disarmament and the peaceful uses of nuclear energy, represents a unique and irreplaceable framework for maintaining and strengthening international peace, security and stability. Given the current challenges in the field of international security, in particular the risks of proliferation, we are convinced that the NPT is more important now than ever. It is our duty to maintain and strengthen its authority and integrity, to continue to advocate its universality. To this end, the EU will continue to promote all the objectives contained in the Treaty.

We meet today amidst a renewed momentum in global arms control and disarmament and an international public debate on ways to advance all the objectives enshrined in the Treaty. We welcome and strongly support the important Resolution 1887 adopted unanimously at the meeting held by the United Nations Security Council, at the level of Heads of State and Government, on 24 September 2009, on nuclear non-proliferation and nuclear disarmament. We also welcome the successful conclusion of negotiations and the signature of a significant new agreement between the United States and the Russian Federation on a Strategic Arms Reduction Treaty and we look forward to its swift ratification. We encourage both States concerned to work towards new agreements for further, comprehensive reductions of their nuclear arsenals, including non-strategic weapons. We appreciate their renewed engagement on other strategic issues related to disarmament and non-proliferation. Consistent with the longstanding and significant support provided by the EU to global nuclear security efforts, we have actively contributed to the successful outcome of the Washington Nuclear Security Summit.

The European Union reaffirms its commitment to seeking a safer world for all and to creating the conditions for a world without nuclear weapons, in accordance with the goals of the NPT. We are convinced that intermediate steps on our path towards this

* Croatia and the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia continue to be part of the Stabilisation and Association Process

objective can also represent significant increases in security for all. The EU is working for general disarmament, notably nuclear disarmament, and welcomes and supports the nuclear disarmament measures and initiatives taken by the two nuclear-weapon States which are members of the European Union. We also reaffirm our commitment to treaty-based nuclear arms control and disarmament and underline the need to renew multilateral efforts and reactivate multilateral instruments, in particular the Conference on Disarmament.

Strengthening the non-proliferation regime should be a key priority for all States in order to prevent the proliferation of weapons of mass destruction and their means of delivery, which undermines the security of all nations. In that respect, the EU remains gravely concerned by the major proliferation challenges posed by the Democratic People's Republic of Korea (DPRK) and the Islamic Republic of Iran, who have both continued to violate their international obligations in clear defiance of the United Nations Security Council and the IAEA, despite repeated and ambitious offers by the international community to discuss these issues, pursue comprehensive and fair negotiations and work for a diplomatic solution. All NPT States Parties must ensure strict compliance with non-proliferation obligations and take resolute action, including the enforcement of UN Security Council Resolutions, in response to the challenges posed by these countries to the non-proliferation regime and to regional and international security.

The European Union is of the firm view that each country has the right to define its own energy strategy and, in this context, we reaffirm the inalienable right of all NPT States parties to the peaceful uses of nuclear energy, in conformity with all their NPT obligations. The EU notes that a growing number of States Parties to the NPT show interest in developing civil nuclear programmes aimed at addressing their long-term energy requirements. Conscious of its obligations under Article IV of the Treaty, the EU will work towards promoting a responsible development of peaceful uses of nuclear energy in the best safety, security and non proliferation conditions, in countries wishing to develop their capacities in this field, within a framework ensuring that technologies and goods are not disseminated for purposes other than peaceful uses. In this regard, the European Union, as a major provider of international assistance, will continue to cooperate actively with third countries and provide its full support to the IAEA, including as a major contributor to the IAEA's Technical Cooperation Fund, with a view to promoting international cooperation for the peaceful uses of nuclear energy, promoting nuclear safety and security, and strengthening effective safeguards to prevent nuclear proliferation.

The EU calls upon all States Parties to live up to both challenges and opportunities and work constructively towards reaffirming the fundamental principles underlying the Treaty, in order to reinforce this unique and irreplaceable multilateral instrument for maintaining and reinforcing international peace, security and stability. At this crucial juncture, a combined effort by all States Parties is necessary to strengthen the Treaty in all its three pillars, which serves the security interests of all.

The EU stresses the absolute necessity of full compliance with all the provisions of the NPT by all States Parties. We also underline the need for policies and strategies of States Parties to be consistent with these provisions.

The Review Conference should help us to foster a sense of common purpose among States Parties and create a more secure international context by expressing renewed support from the entire international community for the goals and obligations of the NPT, by addressing the main issues at stake within all three pillars of the Treaty, and by demonstrating the capacity of the review cycle to give appropriate responses to these challenges. The Review Conference should identify areas in which, and means through which, further progress should be sought in the near future.

We must seize the opportunity of this Review Conference to move forward toward a safer world, one in which it is possible to meet all the objectives enshrined in the NPT, whether they be disarmament, non-proliferation or the peaceful uses of nuclear energy. The EU has come to this meeting with a firm determination to strengthen the international nuclear non-proliferation regime and to help build consensus for a successful outcome of the 2010 NPT Review Conference, on the basis of two basic principles:

- A balanced approach between the three pillars in the review of the operation of the NPT is essential;
- The Review Conference should adopt a set of balanced, concrete, effective, pragmatic and consensual measures for stepping up international efforts against proliferation, pursuing disarmament and ensuring a responsible development of peaceful uses of nuclear energy.

We continue to support the decisions and the implementation of the resolution on the Middle East adopted at the 1995 NPT Review and Extension Conference as well as the Final Document of the 2000 NPT Review Conference, and shall bear in mind the current situation.

We continue to work towards the universality of the NPT and call once again on those States not yet party to the NPT to join the Treaty as Non Nuclear Weapon States and, pending their accession to the NPT, to adhere to its terms and pledge commitments to non-proliferation and disarmament.

Mr. President,

I wish to recall that the EU has elaborated forward-looking proposals on all three pillars of the NPT, introduced as Working Paper 26 at the Third PrepCom, which could be part of an action plan to be adopted at this 2010 Review Conference. The Council of the European Union has recently adopted a Decision relating to the position of the European Union for the 2010 NPT Review Conference. Within the new EU Council Decision, we have identified the following priorities that we consider should be addressed by States Parties at this 2010 Review Conference:

- a reaffirmation by all States parties of their commitment to comply with their obligations and to fulfil the goals of the NPT and towards universal accession to the NPT;

- strengthening the implementation of the Treaty through the adoption of a set of concrete, effective, pragmatic and consensual measures for stepping up international efforts against proliferation, pursuing disarmament and ensuring a responsible development of peaceful uses of nuclear energy and making progress on implementing the NPT 1995 Middle East Resolution;
- reaffirming the commitment to and stressing the need for concrete advancements on the nuclear arms control and disarmament processes, especially through an overall reduction in the global stockpile of nuclear weapons, in accordance with Article VI of the NPT, taking into account the special responsibility of the States that possess the largest arsenals, and agreement on specific and early measures, including achieving rapid entry into force of the CTBT and the start of negotiations in the Conference on Disarmament on an FMCT as indispensable steps towards fulfilment of the obligations and final objective enshrined in Article VI of the NPT;
- strengthening the effectiveness and comprehensiveness of the non-proliferation regime through making the conclusion of a Comprehensive Safeguards Agreement together with the Additional Protocol the verification standard, under Article III of the NPT;
- strengthening the Treaty through a common understanding of States parties on how to respond effectively to a State's withdrawal from the Treaty;
- upholding the Treaty, bearing in mind current major proliferation challenges, in particular in the Democratic People's Republic of Korea and the Islamic Republic of Iran, through a common understanding of States parties on how to respond resolutely and effectively to cases of non-compliance;
- broadening acceptance and support of the concept of responsible development of the peaceful uses of nuclear energy in the best safety, security and non-proliferation conditions and of multilateral approaches to the nuclear fuel cycle.

Mr. President,

The European Union has come to this Review Conference fully aware of its significance and of the importance of reaching a common understanding for concrete advances in all three pillars of the NPT. As we commence our work, let me assure you and all States parties to the NPT of our willingness to engage in serious and pragmatic discussions and negotiations to achieve a balanced and successful outcome, which should chart our future course for a strengthened non-proliferation regime.

Thank you, Mr. President