STATEMENT BY AMB. A.M. KIHURANI, DEPUTY PERMANENT REPRESENTATIVE, PERMANENT MISSION OF THE REPUBLIC OF KENYA DURING THE PREPARATORY MEETING OF THE 2020 NUCLEAR NON-PROLIFERATION TREATY (NPT) REVIEW CONFERENCE

Mr. Chairman,

Allow me to congratulate you on your election to steer the deliberations of this Preparatory Meeting of the 2020 Nuclear–Non-Proliferation Treaty (NPT) Review Conference and to commend you for the effective conduct of our deliberations. I also wish to associate with the statement delivered by the Representative of Venezuela, on behalf of the Non-Aligned Movement, and to that of the Representative of Namibia, on behalf of the African Group.

Mr. Chairman,

Kenya attaches great importance to the international disarmament system and its frameworks and instruments. To that end, we strongly support the ideals and objectives of the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons and urge for its effective implementation through compliance with its provisions by all states, irrespective of their status of possession of nuclear weapons. In that regard, we also call for those states that have not signed and ratified the Treaty to do so, as its universalisation will be an important step forward in strengthening international peace and security.

Mr. Chairman,

Article VI of the Treaty requires that all states parties, without exception, undertake to pursue negotiations for effective measures relating to cessation of the nuclear arms race and nuclear disarmament in good faith. It is in that context, that Kenya joined hands with other like-minded states, in supporting the adoption of the landmark Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons, in order to delegitimise these weapons
of Mass Destruction. While it is clear that nuclear weapons will not disappear in the short term as a result of this ban, we are strongly of the view that the treaty’s adoption is an explicit recognition that nuclear war would result in devastation for humankind and that every effort should be made to prevent it. To that end, we believe that the treaty is a catalyst for change - of attitudes, opinions and moral authority – and is a necessity for garnering the political will to get all nations, including those possessing nuclear weapons, to reconsider their military security doctrines and take the road towards elimination of their nuclear weapons. We also believe that the Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons is an important corollary to the NPT and indeed, reinforces commitment to the ideals expressed in the NPT’s Article VI, aimed at achieving nuclear disarmament.

Mr. Chairman,

We consider that the continued modernization of nuclear arsenals and their delivery systems by some states thereby perpetuating the nuclear arms race, as well as the ballistic missile tests conducted by the Democratic People’s Republic of Korea (North Korea) only serve to undermine the confidence in the NPT as a primary guarantor of international security against the threat of nuclear weapons. In that regard, we commend the decision by North Korea to cease the ballistic missile tests and shut down its nuclear test site, as this has effectively reduced the tensions around the Korean peninsula. However, much more needs to be done in order to build confidence and transparency between the parties concerned. We are encouraged by the decision undertaken for diplomatic talks. To that end, we urge North Korea to reconsider its withdrawal from the NPT and reassert its membership of the treaty and obligations therein. At the same time, it is important that those states possessing nuclear weapons comply with their commitments under the NPT and cease modernization of their nuclear weapons. This would not only be a crucial step towards disarmament, but would also assuage all states about their security from the threat of nuclear weapons, as well as strengthen the credibility of the NPT.
Mr. Chairman,

It goes without saying that the failure of the 2015 NPT Review Conference provided yet another in a line of setbacks to the nuclear non-proliferation regime. While it is unfortunate that the meeting concluded without an outcome document, resulting in continued lack of momentum on issues such as the implementation of the 1995 Resolution on the Middle East, it is further disheartening that the even the outcomes of the earlier conferences, including the Action Plan from the 2010 NPT Review Conference and the “13 practical steps” from the outcome of the conference in the year 2000 were only marginally implemented. In the lead up to and during the 2020 Review Conference, my delegation urges that we strive to meet our obligations in terms of implementation of the Actions from the 2010 Review Conference and fulfill other earlier commitments made, to build the right momentum towards a successful 2020 Review Conference.

As a member of the African nuclear-weapon-free-zone (NWFZ) Treaty (the Treaty of Pelindaba), Kenya appreciates the value of this and other regional nuclear weapon free zone treaties, that have ensured that these weapons of mass destruction do not find a place in our respective zones and provide an additional safeguard from this calamitous threat to humanity. It is our view that as long as nuclear weapons continue to be maintained anywhere, they constitute a clear and constant threat to our existence. It is in that connection, and pursuant to the deliberations of previous Review Conferences, that we encourage and support the creation in the Middle East, of a zone free of nuclear weapons, to provide for similar protection for the countries of that region.

Mr. Chairman,

The Comprehensive Nuclear Test Ban Treaty is an important building block in the nuclear non-proliferation architecture, but it’s implementation continues to be hampered due to the lack of essential signatures and ratifications for its entry into force. We wish to add our voice to the call for those Annex 2 states that have not signed or ratified the treaty to do
so at the soonest opportunity, in order to bring into effect, its safeguards without further delay.

Mr. Chairman,

Kenya strongly believes in the principle enshrined in Article IV of the NPT, of the peaceful use of nuclear energy as as an inalienable right, as this is an important factor for promoting sustainable development. Many developing countries, Kenya included, see nuclear energy as critical in increasing their electric power generation capacity and in helping drive industrialisation. The peaceful use of nuclear energy goes hand in hand with the responsibility of states to provide high levels of nuclear safety. Kenya recognizes the central role of the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) in nuclear security matters, as the only widely recognized intergovernmental organization concerned with all nuclear material and facilities. In that regard, Kenya is working closely with the IAEA in undertaking measures to develop a robust safety culture, in order to build public trust and confidence in the development of nuclear technology in the country. This includes through capacity building programs aimed at realising a base of well-trained human resources, setting up of a comprehensive legal and regulatory framework and implementing Pre-Feasibility Study findings, particularly on establishment of internationally accepted safety standards.

Kenya would wish to see all nations espousing peaceful uses of nuclear energy having the leeway to do so without interference, to further enhance collaboration and greater cost effectiveness of nuclear technology, through increased adoption of its usage.

As I conclude, Mr. Chairman, I wish to assure you of my delegation’s full support for a successful Conference.

I thank you