Statement of Argentina to the Second Session of the Preparatory Committee for the
2020 Review Conference of the Parties to the NPT

Geneva, 23 April 2018

Delivered by the Head of Delegation,
Ambassador Rafael Mariano Grossi

Allow me to begin by congratulating you, Amb. Bugajski, for your election to lead our work in this second session. We know of your constructive spirit, which will guarantee a transparent and inclusive discussion and negotiation process, while allowing us to continue to establish the foundations of a successful Review Conference. You can count with the full support of my Delegation.

We would like to extend our thanks to Amb. Van Der Kwast and his team from the Netherlands during the First Prepcom, in guiding our work in an atmosphere of trust and dialogue. He was also able to reflect, in his summary document, the main points that were addressed during the past meeting as a basis to offer recommendations to strengthen the present review process.

Continuing from the work initiated in 2017, we would like also to thank you, Mr. Chairman, for conducting consultations at the level of State parties and regional groups, with a view to arriving at this meeting having identified areas of common interest.

We still have a long way ahead of us towards the Conference, but the work under way –in all instances, formal and informal– facilitates the construction of the necessary consensus.

We are nearing completion of the Bureau, with the recent appointment of Malaysia as the Chair of the Third and last session of the Preparatory Committee in 2019 and we extend our warm congratulations. We have moved one further step so the preparatory cycle can have coordination of approaches among the authorities from this day.

Still pending, though, is completing the Board with the appointment of the President of the Conference.

Past experience, together with the many recommendations made by Presidents to previous review processes, confirms that there is an ample consensus on the need to have designated the Conference officials as early as possible.

This becomes increasingly important as we approach the date of the Conference, bearing in mind the importance of the substantive issues on the table, and the divergence of positions and approaches.

Mr. Chairman,

The Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons is the cornerstone of the global nuclear non-proliferation regime, and the 2020 Review Conference –which will mark the 50th anniversary of its entry into force– appears as a chance to reaffirm the commitment of State parties to the necessary balance of rights and obligations that we consider still relevant today, even after 50 years.

The three pillars of the NPT have evolved throughout the years and have come to reflect the legal and political framework that underpins the policies of both nuclear-weapons and non-nuclear-weapons states. That framework, in time, is present in a specific international context, which demands that we re-think the best way to keep it updated in order to achieve the ultimate goal: a robust regime, which prevents countries from considering they may opt to have nuclear weapons, and where the existing weapons are destroyed in a verifiably, transparent and irreversible manner.

This international context presents with significant challenges, showing scenarios that cannot but concern us regarding the responsibility we still have of preventing escalations in conflicts through the use of nuclear weapons.

Regrettably, the use of weapons of mass destruction – which we thought was confined to the realm of theory and speculation–, has been back to the news headlines. We can see this quite dramatically in the field of chemical weapons. The issues in the NPT agenda are not just for specialists and diplomats focusing on disarmament and non-proliferation. On the contrary, they have a direct impact on international peace, security and stability, which are fundamental for the wellbeing of our societies.
The current international situation reinforces the priority and relevance of the NPT. As the rest of the international community, Argentina has received with interest and with hope the recent declarations regarding the decision to halt the nuclear and missile tests by North Korea. We expect the summit meetings with South Korea and with the United States will consolidate them and open the path to more ambitious and verifiable agreements. In particular, we consider that the signature and ratification of the CTBT and the prompt return of the IAEA inspectors would be additional positive signs towards the region and the international community as a whole.

We have to recognize that in spite of the frustrated aspirations that many of us may have regarding the implementation of various goals of the NPT in a shorter term - in terms of disarmament, for instance - we must recognize that after its indefinite extension 25 years ago, if we did not have this Treaty the world would be a considerably darker place.

We need only to imagine the case if, on top of the urgent concerns in terms of international security, we needed to add uncertainty regarding the force and permanence of the Treaty itself.

Mr. Chairman,

In our view, the 2020 Conference will be a Review and Recommitment Conference.

Both are important and indispensable aspects.

The review, in itself, is imperative. Especially after the 2015 exercise, as a whole, was frustrated by the lack of final consensus.

Much, and of much importance, has happened in these past years, and since 2010 the NPT does not count with a shared vision agreed by its Parties. We must focus our efforts so that the review is not hostage to political questions, important as they may be, but which must not lead us away from the rich overall picture and from the importance of fulfilling truly the mandate of the Conference, which includes the review of the implementation of the Treaty in its entirety.

We need only observe what has happened in terms of safety after the Fukushima Daiichi accident. Countries have undertaken a series of converging actions towards a substantive and profound improvement in this field. Likewise, efforts in the field of security have improved drastically through high-level initiatives, including a series of Presidential Summits and other multinational undertakings that would have seemed unimaginable on such a field only a few years ago.

Another case is the field of Safeguards, a system that has been considerably modernized through the introduction of integrated safeguards, or the field of Peaceful Uses of Nuclear Energy, a field of activity that has experienced a large development in the past few years and which is sustained and substantiated by the safeguards system managed by IAEA under the provisions precisely of the NPT. This last consideration is of special interest to all developing countries.

All these aspects deserve a systematic and considerate review exercise.

Throughout the agenda for this meeting, my Delegation will elaborate further the substantive considerations under each Cluster.

Mr. Chairman,

The 2020 Conference will be, in our view, a Conference also to recommit to the NPT.

This is key in the context of the 50 years of the Treaty and the 25 years of indefinite extension.

There are no doubts that the NPT has greatly contributed to the international security. Though there is still a way to go, we can find guidance in the articles of this historical Treaty itself.

The eyes of our societies are on us. The international community as a whole is entitled to demand greater progress and a political commitment.

Here, in Geneva, we can improve the preparatory process and lay the foundations for the last stop, in 2019, before arriving in our final destination in New York. It is not the time to slow down or to look back, but quite the opposite. 2020 will be here tomorrow.

Thank you.