2018 Preparatory Committee for the 2020 Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty Review Conference
April 23 – May 4, 2018 in Geneva

Discussion of the Chair’s summary
Statement Austria

Mr. Chair,

Austria wishes to congratulate you Ambassador Bugajski on your national day and thank you for the always friendly and patient way in which you have chaired this meeting. Thus you have created a good atmosphere for our work. I also wish to pay tribute to the work of your team, UNODA and the translators.

Austria wishes to complement a number of key points of this second PrepCom which were not fully reflected in the summary, we assume because you wanted to shorten the disarmament part a lot in comparison to last year.

Given our discussion over the last two weeks, the sense of urgency for the implementation of Article VI should have been expressed more forcefully in the summary. We were surprised to read that “some” and not “any” nuclear weapon modernization programmes were not consistent with the commitments under the treaty.

We missed a reflection, as it was done in last year’s summary that we have deepened our knowledge about the catastrophic humanitarian consequences inter alia through international conferences. We know now that the immediate, mid- and long-term consequences of a nuclear weapon explosion are significantly graver than it was previously understood. These catastrophic consequences will not be constrained by national borders, but have regional or even global effects and nuclear weapons are potentially threatening the very survival of humanity. As nuclear weapons pose a constant global threat, it is the shared responsibility of all states to pursue all efforts to contribute to nuclear disarmament. More time should be made available to discuss the catastrophic humanitarian consequences in the context of the NPT. Positions put forward by a considerable number of states parties, as it was the case in WP.9, supported by 22 countries should be reflected, especially when we find comments by just a single delegation in your summary.

We welcome that also this PrepCom reaffirmed our shared goal of a world without nuclear weapons, as outlined in the NPT. Austria was among the many states that stressed that continued possession of nuclear weapons fuels proliferation. We could not find this fundamental point in the summary.
Echoing most previous speakers, my country particularly welcomes the contribution to the implementation of Article VI through the adoption of the TPNW. We are encouraged by the broad support for the TPNW expressed during the last days. In our view this should have been adequately reflected in the summary by welcoming the Treaty and not merely taking note. Indeed the number of ratifications of the TPNW is growing, and I wish to congratulate Palau on the deposition of its ratification yesterday. Austria will submit its instrument of ratification of the TPNW next week.

My country is firmly attached to the CTBT, which like the TPNW is indispensable for the full implementation of article VI. The discussions held in this PrepCom with regard to the Korean peninsula once again expressed the call on all annex 2 countries, including the nuclear armed states, to sign and ratify the CTBT without further delay and preconditions. Certainly, the current moratoria need to be maintained as an interim step and this could have been more forcefully reflected in the summary of our discussions. Austria places high importance on the long-overdue entry into force of this landmark treaty and welcomes the fact that the IMS is already fully operational.

Notwithstanding the unconditional legal obligation under the NPT to disarm and reaffirming the unequivocal undertaking, I would like to briefly touch upon something that some have referred to as the urgent need to devote more attention to discuss security implications of nuclear weapons.

Many delegations underlined that security cannot be based on nuclear weapons. This is even the underlying foundation of the NPT and should have been properly reflected in our report. In this respect we noted that the report of the eminent persons group presented by the Japanese Foreign Minister Kono during our session, calls nuclear deterrence a dangerous long-term basis for global security and encourages all states to seek a better solution.

This is precisely what article VI calls for: ceasing to base security policy on nuclear weapons. Otherwise we can never reach the objective of the NPT – a world without nuclear weapons.