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STATEMENT
by the Head of the Delegation of Ukraine at the Third session
of the Preparatory Committee for the 2020 NPT Review Conference
(New York, 30 April 2019)

Mr. Chairman,
At the outset, on behalf of the delegation of Ukraine allow me to congratulate you sincerely on your election as the Chair of the Third session of the Preparatory Committee. We hope that under your wise leadership the current PrepCom will be able to prepare substantial recommendations for 2020 NPT Review Conference. The delegation of Ukraine looks forward to the positive outcome of this session.

Mr. Chairman,
Ukraine consistently supports a multilateral approach to disarmament and international security agenda. The Treaty on Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons is a cornerstone of the nuclear non-proliferation regime and the foundation for the pursuit of nuclear disarmament and the peaceful uses of nuclear energy. However, we cannot fail to recognize that Russia’s military aggression against Ukraine in violation of the key principles of the NPT challenged the efficiency of its mechanisms. Under such circumstances, Ukraine’s unwavering belief in the need to support effective implementation, further strengthening and universalization of the NPT has only increased.

There are other international instruments that would contribute significantly to the Treaty’s objectives. In particular, the universalization of the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty remains one of the key objectives of the multilateral efforts in the area of nuclear disarmament and non-proliferation. We support the signing of the Treaty and its ratification by all States. Nuclear test moratorium voluntarily declared by different states plays a necessary, but not sufficient role as it will never replace the legally binding nature of the CTBT. Therefore, Ukraine calls upon the States, which have yet to sign or ratify the CTBT to do so without delay.

One of the important elements of non-proliferation and nuclear disarmament is the Fissile Material Cut-Off Treaty (FMCT). Ukraine continues to support the need to negotiate and conclude such a Treaty, which will be essential both to constrain nuclear proliferation and to advance the goal of nuclear disarmament. In this regard, we would also like to recall that, in early 2019, Ukraine’s Presidency of the Conference on Disarmament undertook all efforts to reach consensus on this and other issues of no less importance in order to pave the way for the adoption of
the Program of Work. We deeply regret that there is still a deadlock within the Conference on Disarmament and would welcome the resumption of its activities on the FMCT as soon as possible.

Ukraine supports the establishment of Nuclear-Weapon-Free Zones worldwide. With WMD-free zones established we will get closer to the ultimate goal of total elimination of nuclear weapons. Given the current volatile and unstable situation in the Middle East, the establishment of such a zone in this region should continue to be regarded as a matter of priority.

We continue to follow the view that the IAEA’s system of safeguards is a fundamental component of the nuclear nonproliferation regime and plays an extremely valuable role in the implementation of the NPT. Ukraine is firmly resolved to strengthening the IAEA safeguards regime and supports its further universalization.

Mr. Chairman,

In 1994, Ukraine renounced its nuclear weapons and acceded to the NPT as a non-nuclear-weapon state. At that time, this decision was largely based on the clear international security guarantees provided in writing, in particular in the Budapest Memorandum on Security Assurances signed by Ukraine, the US, the UK and the Russian Federation.

The State-signatories to the Memorandum “reaffirmed their commitment to Ukraine to respect the independence and sovereignty and the existing borders of Ukraine”, as well as “reaffirmed their obligation to refrain from the threat or use of force against the territorial integrity or political independence of Ukraine”.

In an era of looming proliferation threats as well as efforts to quell security concerns of states seeking nuclear deterrent capabilities, the validity of the Budapest Memorandum is especially vital.

Brutal violation of the international obligations, including under the Budapest Memorandum, by Russia – a nuclear-weapon State and a permanent UN Security Council member, has undermined the whole UN-based security system. Let me recall the 2010 NPT Review Conference Final Document, where one of its paragraphs clearly reads, “All nuclear-weapon States commit to fully respect their existing commitments with regard to security assurances”.

Recently, the non-proliferation regime has faced another significant challenge, namely the Intermediate-Range Nuclear Forces Treaty crisis caused by Russia’s non-compliance with this Treaty. In this regard, we believe that the decision of the United States to withdraw from this document is justified and corresponds to the present security situation both in the European continent and in the world as a whole. In turn, Russia’s decision to suspend its participation in the Treaty has proved once again that the cynicism is the major principle of the
Russian state policy. The real reason of the breakdown of the Treaty lies behind Russia’s blatant and repeated violation of its provisions.

We are deeply concerned with this situation given the fact of increasing militarization of the occupied Crimea by the occupying State, including developing Russian nuclear capabilities in this area. Transformation of the Crimean peninsula which used to be a famous recreation area, into the Russian military base with a nuclear potential threatens not only to Ukraine but also the entire European continent and beyond.

Last year, the United Nations General Assembly gave the clear message to this flagrant violation of international law, particularly by adopting the resolution 73/194 “Problem of the militarization of the Autonomous Republic of Crimea and the city of Sevastopol, Ukraine, as well as parts of the Black Sea and the Sea of Azov”. I would like to recall, in particular, para 1 of this resolution which stresses that “the presence of Russian troops in Crimea is contrary to the national sovereignty, political independence and territorial integrity of Ukraine and undermines the security and stability of neighbouring countries and the European region”. In para 2 of the same resolution the GA expressed “its grave concern over the progressive militarization of Crimea by the Russian Federation as the occupying Power, and also expressed concern over reports of the continuing destabilization of Crimea owing to transfers by the Russian Federation of weapon systems, including nuclear-capable aircraft and missiles, weapons, ammunition and military personnel to the territory of Ukraine, and urges the Russian Federation to stop such activity”.

In conclusion, Mr. Chairman, let me assure Ukraine’s full support and cooperation in the course of the current NPT Preparatory Committee session.

I thank you.