SLOVAKIA

STATEMENT

by

His Excellency
Ambassador Michal Mlynár

Permanent Representative of the Slovak Republic to the United Nations in New York

at the third Session of the Preparatory Committee
for the 2020 Review Conference of the Parties
to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons

General debate
New York, 30 April 2019
Mr. Chairman,

Allow me to start by congratulating you, on your assumption of the Chairmanship of the 3rd Preparatory Committee and to wish you all success. I assure you of Slovakia’s full support to move the work of the Committee forward. Slovakia aligns itself with the statement delivered on behalf of the European Union. Still, I would like to stress the following issues in my national capacity.

Mr. Chairman,

Next year will mark the 50th anniversary of the entry into force of the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT). For almost 50 years the NPT remains the cornerstone of the global nuclear non-proliferation and disarmament regime and an indispensable multilateral instrument reinforcing international peace and security.

Slovakia considers all three NPT pillars equally important. We need to reaffirm the centrality and integrity of the NPT as the cornerstone of the global nuclear non-proliferation regime, the essential foundation for the pursuit of nuclear disarmament as well as for further development of peaceful uses of nuclear energy. It is also critical that we continue to invest into efforts to promote the universalization of the NPT to make it a truly global instrument.

As we move towards the 2020 Review Conference, all NPT State Parties must implement all assumed commitments. It is our shared responsibility to make the Review Conference a success and make further progress on strengthening the NPT regime. Let me assure you that Slovakia will spare no effort to contribute to its positive outcome.

Slovakia is committed to achieve the goal of total elimination of nuclear weapons. We believe this can be best achieved by advancing “progressive approach” of mutually reinforcing legal measures and practical instruments to promote nuclear disarmament, which takes into account the prevailing security environment. Moreover, substantive and result-oriented engagement of all states possessing nuclear weapons is a must in this respect. No shortcuts can lead us towards the global zero. We are also open to helpful initiatives that take into account the prevailing international situation while spurring dialogue on how to advance nuclear disarmament in practical terms.

The Conference on Disarmament, the single multilateral disarmament negotiating forum of the international community, marks its 40th anniversary this year. Regrettably, the CD has been deadlocked for more than half of this period. For treaty-based nuclear disarmament and arms control, the revitalization of the Conference on Disarmament is of key importance and matter of urgency.

In this context, Slovakia continues to support the immediate commencement of negotiations in the Conference on Disarmament on a Treaty banning the production of fissile material for nuclear weapons and other nuclear explosive devices in accordance with the document CD/1299 and the mandate contained therein. We are convinced that this topic is the most advanced and ripe for negotiations in the CD. We also call upon all States possessing nuclear weapons that have not yet done so to declare and uphold an immediate moratorium on their production of fissile material for nuclear weapons or other nuclear explosive devices.
Entry into force of the **Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty** (CTBT) is a crucial step for advancing disarmament and non-proliferation. We call on all States that have not yet done so, in particular the remaining Annex II States, to **sign and ratify the CTBT** without further delay. Slovakia continues to be a staunch supporter of the CTBT, including of building up the verification capabilities of the CTBTO Preparatory Commission. Since 2001, Slovakia has hosted various On-Site Inspection training activities. We are also honoured that Slovakia was selected to host two field Build-Up Exercises in 2020 aimed at conducting comprehensive testing of the On-Site Inspection operational capabilities. We stand ready to further deepen existing cooperation with the Preparatory Commission.

We are disappointed that the **INF Treaty** has come on the brink of its collapse despite several years of intensive diplomatic efforts by NATO and EU countries to avoid this situation. However, an disarmament treaty, which is respected only by one party, becomes not sustainable. The remaining 3 months represent the last window of opportunity for dialogue and to take the necessary measures to return to full and verifiable compliance to preserve the Treaty. Russia has special responsibility in this respect.

Slovakia continues to attach great importance to the New START Treaty. We encourage the United States and the Russian Federation to extend the New Strategic Arms Reduction Treaty START. We also encourage both sides to seek further reductions to their arsenals including strategic and non-strategic, deployed and non-deployed nuclear weapons and discuss further on confidence building, transparency, verification activities and reporting.

Mr. Chairman,

Slovakia supports the continued implementation of the **Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action** as long as Iran continues to fully implement all its nuclear related commitments. We welcome progress achieved so far as it was confirmed by the 14 consecutive IAEA reports since Implementation Day. We underline the need to continue ensuring full and effective implementation throughout the entire lifetime of the deal. We call on all parties to refrain from activities that could undermine it. We believe that the continued full and effective implementation of the JCPOA significantly strengthens the NPT and contributes to a conducive regional security environment.

The proliferation of nuclear weapons and their means of delivery continues to be a challenge for the international community and a threat to the international peace and security. Slovakia supports the complete **denuclearization of Korean peninsula**, the full implementation of relevant UNSC resolutions and a comprehensive solution through diplomacy, including the summit meetings of the United States with DPRK and South Korea with DPRK, which helped to reduce tension on the Korean peninsula. We are committed to maintain pressure, and we call on the DPRK to avoid returning to provocative actions. Instead, Pyongyang needs to continue the negotiations and return to the NPT, CTBT and International Atomic Energy Agency rules to achieve complete, verifiable and irreversible denuclearisation, along with long lasting peace and prosperity on the entire peninsula.
Mr. Chairman,

Nuclear energy and its peaceful uses remains a key priority for Slovakia. My country’s nuclear power programme and the production of nuclear power accounts for about 55% of gross national electricity production, which is a clear demonstration of its strategic importance in the Slovak energy mix. Moreover, in line with the objectives stated in the Slovak Energy Policy and the draft Integrated National Energy and Climate Plan (INECP) submitted by Slovakia to the European Commission, nuclear energy continues to be one of the main pillars of our energy portfolio, a commitment also reaffirmed by my government on several occasions. Currently, the third and fourth unit at the Mochovce nuclear power plant are being constructed and planned to be commissioned by the end of this and next year respectively. In addition, the assessments for a new nuclear source at the Jaslovske Bohunice site are being made. With these expansions Slovak nuclear power programme should provide for sufficient energy generating capacity for my country in the years to come.

Safe and sustainable use of nuclear energy will play an important role in transition to low carbon economies and meeting the Paris Agreement goal of limiting global temperature rise below 2°C. This has been confirmed by recent Special report of the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change “Global Warming of 1,5°C”, European Commission’s strategic long-term vision for a climate neutral Europe by 2050—“A Clean Planet for All” as well as the 2018 IAEA publication on Climate Change and Nuclear Power. Slovakia is of view that nuclear power as a low carbon technology and with its large capacity and dispatchable outputs has a significant role to play in combating/mitigating climate change as well as in addressing many socio-economic challenges, including through the attainment of the Sustainable Development Goals. In this regard, we highlight the role of the International Atomic Energy Agency in promoting peaceful uses of nuclear energy, including through nuclear science, applications and technology and wish to reiterate its full support to the IAEA efforts in this field.

Needless to say that all activities related to the peaceful use of nuclear energy must always be accompanied by vigorous implementation and high levels of nuclear safety. For my country this is one of the key and most important preconditions to be observed at all nuclear installation and we fully subscribe to the high-level EU-wide safety objective to prevent accidents and avoid radioactive releases in this regard. As for the international cooperation, Slovakia reiterates the central role of the IAEA and its efforts aimed to strengthen nuclear safety across the world and focus on its continuous improvement, including through the revision of Safety Standards and lessons learned from the Agency’s peer reviews and advisory services. We call upon all countries, particularly those with nuclear power programme and/or radiation technology to adhere to the international nuclear safety conventions to further foster safety culture (in particular the Convention on Nuclear Safety and the Joint Convention on the Management of Spent Fuel and Radioactive Waste).

While recognising that nuclear security remains the responsibility of each State, IAEA plays an indispensable role in strengthening the nuclear security framework globally and in coordinating international cooperation in this realm. The entry into force of the Amendment to the Convention on Physical Protection of Nuclear Material was an essential step in the right direction. Its universalisation will significantly contribute to the strengthening of nuclear security worldwide. Slovakia also supports international efforts that mitigate nuclear risks and help prevent terrorists and other non-state actors from acquiring, trafficking or use of nuclear or other radioactive materials, such as UN Security Council resolutions 1540 and 2325 or the Global Initiative to Combat Nuclear Terrorism (GICNT) or Proliferation Security Initiative (PSI).
My delegation fully supports the IAEA Technical Cooperation Programme as the main vehicle for the transfer of nuclear technologies and of the IAEA´s services to the Member States in a non-discriminatory manner. We would particularly like to highlight the role of the TC in sharing and providing scientific and technical assistance, expertise and know-how as well as in addressing national socio-economic challenges and development objectives. We encourage the Agency to continue to refine the TC programme and its delivery in line with the Agency´s Statute. Lastly, I would also like to express Slovakia´s support for activities of the Group of Friends for Women in Nuclear; the initiative established in Vienna and announced at the June 2017 IAEA Board of Governors. My country, as its member fully supports the Group´s work in achieving the goals of strengthening the position and increasing the number of women in the field of nuclear energy. We stand ready to contribute towards the achievement of this objective.

Mr. Chairman,

In conclusion, allow me to express hope that the third Preparatory Committee will enable us to open avenues for strengthening the NPT regime and to prepare the ground – both in terms of procedure and substance – for achieving a successful outcome at the 2020 NPT Review Conference. Slovakia stands ready to cooperate with other delegations in achieving this objective.

Thank you.