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REPUBLIC OF SOUTH AFRICA



The Royal Thai Government

## Joint Communique To Commemorate the 50<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT)

On its 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary, **Algeria, Austria, Brazil, Chile, Costa Rica, Ecuador, Egypt, Indonesia, Ireland, Malaysia, Mexico, Morocco, New Zealand, Nigeria, the Philippines, South Africa** and **Thailand** celebrate the entry into force of the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT). The inception of the NPT at a time of heightened tensions and mistrust is a testament to the value of international cooperation and the success of multilateral diplomacy in a challenging environment such as the international security situation of today.

Five decades since its entry into force, the NPT remains an invaluable instrument in contributing to international peace and security. As the cornerstone of the global nuclear disarmament and nuclear non-proliferation regime, the NPT has been instrumental in supporting international efforts to curtail the threats posed by nuclear weapons and their proliferation, while providing a foundation for global nuclear disarmament leading to the complete elimination of nuclear weapons in order to rid humanity of the existential threats they pose.

The deep concern at the continued threat posed to humanity by nuclear weapons and the possibility of their catastrophic humanitarian impacts also underline the urgent need for significant and tangible progress. In this regard, we recall the concern expressed by all States Parties at the catastrophic humanitarian consequences of any use of nuclear weapons as reflected in the Final Document of the 2010 NPT Review Conference.

The NPT has played a pivotal role in promoting the diverse peaceful uses of nuclear energy, ensuring that nuclear non-proliferation does not impede the rights and access of States Parties to the peaceful uses of nuclear energy. In this regard, the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) has succeeded in playing an effective role towards NPT implementation.

This semi-centennial of the NPT serves as a reminder of the importance of the universalization of the NPT. All States that have not yet done so should join the Treaty as non-nuclear-weapon States without further delay or conditions. This is an opportunity to redouble our collective efforts to fully implement the equal and mutually reinforcing three pillars of the Treaty, which is essential for realizing its objectives. At previous Review Conferences, States Parties entered into specific commitments to implement the Treaty's obligations. The accomplishments achieved to date pursuant to the NPT are a culmination of concerted international efforts towards this end.

Success in the implementation of the Treaty lies in the hands of its States Parties. Non-nuclear-weapon States committed not to develop nuclear weapons in exchange for the elimination of nuclear arsenals by the nuclear-weapon States. Progress on nuclear disarmament has lagged behind that on nuclear non-proliferation and the peaceful uses of nuclear energy. It is urgently necessary to implement concrete, transparent, verifiable and irreversible nuclear disarmament measures in order to fulfill the obligations and commitments within the framework of the NPT. We must uphold and preserve the NPT's credibility, viability and effectiveness, and the only way to protect the NPT is to implement it.

Though some progress on nuclear disarmament has been achieved over the last five decades, it is far from sufficient and the obligation of nuclear disarmament has still not been fulfilled. Current modernization and upgrading programmes put the progress achieved in danger of reversal. At the same time, we see a highly concerning erosion of the multilateral nuclear disarmament and arms-control architecture with existing agreements being terminated and others in danger. The contemporary global security environment and challenges warrant urgent progress.

At the 2000 NPT Review Conference, the nuclear-weapon States unequivocally undertook to accomplish the total elimination of their nuclear arsenals leading to nuclear disarmament and committed to accelerating progress in this regard. The 2010 Action Plan subsequently reaffirmed the decisions taken in 1995 and 2000, including the 13 practical steps, to advance the implementation of Article VI of the NPT. The nuclear-weapon States, bearing in mind their special responsibility, committed to accelerate progress on the steps leading to nuclear disarmament. We urge the nuclear-weapon States to implement their existing commitments and also to build further upon them in order to accelerate fulfillment of their obligations under the NPT.

The 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the entry into force of the NPT coincides with the 25<sup>th</sup> anniversary of its indefinite extension. It is important to recall that the indefinite extension of the NPT was part of a package of decisions including a decision to strengthen the Treaty's Review Process, identify principles and objectives for nuclear disarmament and non-proliferation and a Resolution on the establishment of a zone free of nuclear weapons and other weapons of mass destruction in the Middle East. These decisions together with the Middle East Resolution are considered inseparable from the indefinite extension of the NPT, and must be honored by all States Parties.

It should also be stressed that the indefinite extension of the Treaty cannot in any way be interpreted as a justification for the indefinite retention of nuclear weapons.

The establishment of Nuclear-Weapon-Free-Zones (NWFZs) in all regions of the world are positive steps and important interim measures towards strengthening global nuclear disarmament and non-proliferation and realizing the objectives of the NPT, pending the total elimination of nuclear weapons.

On this momentous occasion, we solemnly reaffirm our past commitments agreed upon during previous NPT Review Conferences, which should be built upon at the next Review Conference. We call on other States Parties to do the same. As the history of the NPT was not devoid of challenges, so today it faces difficult challenges, again. However, our awareness of these various hurdles should not be a reason to falter in our stride; it should instead strengthen our resolve to work together to overcome them, through more open, inclusive and transparent multilateral dialogue, with civility and diplomacy, within the context of the NPT. International peace and security will only be achieved through cooperation and concrete progress towards the goal of the NPT, which is a world without nuclear weapons.

The upcoming Review Conference of the NPT, which was postponed due to the unfortunate circumstances of the COVID-19 pandemic, presents a timely opportunity for the States Parties to undertake a comprehensive review and assessment of the current status of the Treaty and the implementation of its three pillars as well as the previous obligations and commitments within its framework. The Review Conference has the responsibility to identify additional areas and means for further concrete progress to be made in the future. We look forward to work with other States Parties in this regard. There is no doubt that the implementation of disarmament commitments would have allowed more resources to be allocated for sustainable development as well as international cooperation and preparedness to deal with such public health and global emergencies.

It is now time that States Parties translate words into concrete actions backed by clear and agreed upon benchmarks and timelines. Only through such efforts can we look ahead towards a successful next 50 years of the NPT, improving on the important achievements of the last 50 years, which we presently commemorate.

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NZ disarmament statements online, [www.converge.org.nz/pma/nzdist.htm](http://www.converge.org.nz/pma/nzdist.htm)