
2020 Review Conference of the Parties to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons

12 March 2020

Original: English

New York, 27 April–22 May 2020

Stepping stones for advancing nuclear disarmament

**Joint working paper submitted by Argentina, Canada, Finland,
Germany, Indonesia, Japan, Jordan, Kazakhstan, the Netherlands,
New Zealand, Norway, the Republic of Korea, Spain, Sweden
and Switzerland**

Ministers adopted a Ministerial Declaration¹ at their meeting in Berlin on 25 February 2020 and identified in the annex to that Declaration a non-exhaustive list of short-term, achievable and meaningful actions – stepping stones – for advancing nuclear disarmament (see annex).

¹ Available from www.auswaertiges-amt.de/en/newsroom/news/npt-50/2310112.



Annex

Stepping stones for advancing nuclear disarmament

We reaffirm the mutually reinforcing character of the three pillars of the NPT and underline that previously agreed measures and commitments, including the 2000 NPT Review Conference's "13 Steps" and the 2010 NPT Review Conference's "64 Point Action Plan", remain valid and form the basis for making further progress in fully implementing the treaty and achieving a world free of nuclear weapons.

The stepping stones offer concrete opportunities to reduce international tensions, improve global security, serve as confidence-building measures and pave the way for further progress in the years to come, with the aim of achieving our shared goal of a world free of nuclear weapons. These areas include, inter alia, diminishing the role of nuclear weapons in security policies and doctrines, minimizing the risk of conflict and accidental nuclear weapon use, strengthening cooperation and building trust, enhancing transparency on arsenals and doctrines and strengthening the nuclear arms control architecture.

We pledge to take responsibility in promoting, including, but not exclusively, the following stepping stones on the way to implementing nuclear disarmament, and we invite all states to consider, support and implement them:

- Nuclear-Weapon States to acknowledge the need to ensure that nuclear weapons will never be used again and to advance nuclear disarmament.
- The United States and Russia to extend New START and engage in talks on its possible expansion.
- Nuclear-Weapon States to reduce or further reduce their nuclear arsenals and to contribute to next-generation arms control arrangements.
- Nuclear-Weapon States, collectively or individually, to discuss and take practical measures to reduce the role of nuclear weapons in their policies and doctrines.
- Nuclear-Weapon States to deepen discussions on nuclear doctrine and declaratory policies, both among themselves and with Non-Nuclear Weapon States, at the upcoming NPT Review Conference and throughout the next NPT review cycle.
- Nuclear-Weapon States to report to parties to the NPT on arsenals and plans for their modernisation.
- Nuclear-Weapon States, collectively or individually, to tighten Negative Security Assurances, including in the context of Treaties establishing Nuclear Weapons-Free Zones.
- All States to support the establishment of Nuclear Weapons-Free Zones in all regions of the world on the basis of arrangements freely arrived at among States of the region concerned, including the establishment of Middle East zone free of nuclear weapons and other weapons of mass destruction in accordance with the 1995 resolution on the Middle East, in relation to which we feel encouraged by the first session of the conference held in 2019 and continuous efforts in this regard.
- Nuclear-Weapon States and Nuclear Possessor States to engage in a structured dialogue to assess, minimize and address nuclear risks, including by measures aimed at preventing crisis, extending decision-times in crisis and measures to minimise potential vulnerabilities emerging from disruptive technologies and cyber threats, e.g. on command and control.

- Nuclear-Weapon States to improve or establish crisis communication and protocol among each other, e.g. by hotlines and risk reduction centres.
- Nuclear-Weapon States to address increasing entanglement of conventional and nuclear systems and to take measures to reverse such development.
- All States to uphold existing moratoria on nuclear-weapon test explosions or any other nuclear explosion and to enhance efforts towards the long overdue entry into force of the Comprehensive Test Ban Treaty (CTBT), through continued advocacy vis-à-vis and engagement by the States whose ratification is required, as well as political, technical and financial efforts to further strengthen the International Monitoring Systems and the Comprehensive Test Ban Treaty Organization (CTBTO).
- All States to declare and uphold moratoria on the production of fissile material for use in nuclear weapons or other nuclear explosive devices.
- Nuclear-Weapon States and Nuclear Possessor States to show leadership to unblock negotiations on a treaty prohibiting fissile material production.
- All States to support the ongoing initiatives on developing multilateral nuclear disarmament verification capacities, such as the International Partnership for Nuclear Disarmament Verification and efforts within the United Nations such as Groups of Governmental Experts, Open-ended Working Groups and capacity building.
- All States to engage with the young generation, including through dialogue platforms, mentoring, internships, fellowships, scholarships, model events and youth group activities.
- All States to encourage visits to and interaction with communities affected by nuclear weapons, including Hiroshima and Nagasaki, and former nuclear test sites such as Semipalatinsk and in the Pacific.
- All States to ensure the full and effective participation of women and to further integrate gender perspectives in all aspects of nuclear disarmament and non-proliferation decision-making processes.
- Nuclear-Weapon States to engage in and intensify dialogue on maintaining strategic stability, with maximum transparency vis-à-vis the international community, to foster mutual understanding and trust and setting the frame for future arms-control agreements and disarmament.
- All parties to the NPT to report on their implementation of obligations and commitments under the NPT using a standardized reporting format, and to support proposals to strengthen reporting and transparency commitments.
- Each Nuclear-Weapon State to submit its NPT implementation reports in advance of the 2020 NPT Review Conference.
- All states to commit to enhancing the NPT review cycle to improve implementation in all its aspects and to support ongoing efforts to strengthen the NPT review process.

Recognizing various State perspectives, the above stepping stones are interlinked and mutually reinforcing and offer a way to build political momentum that could help unlock current diplomatic blockages and advance the implementation of nuclear disarmament commitments. Our governments will do their utmost to this end.