



**High-Level Meeting to commemorate the International Day for
the Total Elimination of Nuclear Weapons**

**Statement by Ambassador Andreas D. Mavroyiannis,
Permanent Representative of Cyprus to the United Nations
New York, 2 October 2020**

Excellencies, distinguished delegates,

Peace is the cornerstone of human civilisation. It is at the heart of our system of values and our approach to international relations. Furthermore, as a conflict state in a volatile region, we are fully cognizant of the effects of warfare on countries and their populations. What is true for warfare in general, is even more so for non-conventional war, using nuclear weapons. Hence, Cyprus is fully in favour of nuclear disarmament.

Beyond the unquestionable existential threat that nuclear weapons pose for all of us, we are of the view that nuclear weapons are not a source of security. The balance of terror is not appealing.

Deterring aggression between powers with catastrophic nuclear capabilities is not a sustainable security paradigm. In fact, multilateral architecture was designed around collective security that should have made non-aggression the rule, irrespective of military capabilities.

Beyond the mere existence of annihilating nuclear arsenals, Cyprus is concerned about the ever-present possibility of nuclear weapons proliferating and/or falling in the wrong hands. So long as nuclear disarmament is unrealized, the non-proliferation architecture we have put in place – with the NPT at its core - must be respected. At the same time, international and regional cooperation is of utmost importance for nuclear safety and security, given the transboundary nature of the impact of any nuclear accident, while nuclear power must be harnessed safely and responsibly, without jeopardizing human and environmental security of the country or in neighbouring states.

Like other small states, our security relies heavily on the international system of collective security and effective multilateralism, including the disarmament and arms control regime. In addition to safeguarding the NPT as the cornerstone and linchpin of the international non-proliferation regime, we would like to see the CTBT enter into force as soon as possible. We also advocate for the commencement of negotiations on an effectively verifiable Fissile Material Cut-off Treaty in the Conference of Disarmament, which we are seeking to join.

Nuclear disarmament is facing numerous challenges and we must work together with determination to prevent our efforts from being reversed. The Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action, a true accomplishment of multilateral diplomacy, is at a critical juncture, the New START Treaty is set to expire in 2021 if not extended, nuclear activities are taking place in a non-verifiable and non-transparent manner, and billions are spent on developing new and more potent nuclear weapons. These challenges serve as a reminder that there is lack of trust amongst us and that collective security – including the elimination of the threat or use of force – is not yet within reach. We must all assume fully our responsibility and enhance our efforts for the promotion of international peace and security and press forward with the ultimate goal of “a world free of nuclear weapons”.

I thank you for your attention.