



**Thematic Seminar on Pillar II (Non-Proliferation) of the Treaty
on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons**

**Opening Remarks by Ms. Izumi Nakamitsu
High Representative for Disarmament Affairs**



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Excellencies,

Ladies and gentlemen,

It is my great pleasure to welcome you to this thematic seminar. The focus of this event is on nuclear non-proliferation or pillar II of the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT). This is the final in our series of thematic seminars exploring each of the three pillars of the NPT: States Parties had an opportunity to explore pillar III in Vienna in November 2019 and pillar I in Geneva in January of this year.

These thematic seminars are only possible because of the generous contribution by the European Union. Through its support for this project of activities in the lead up to the NPT Review Conference, the European Union has facilitated these deep dives into each pillar of the Treaty, in addition to the regional meetings for States Parties in Africa, Asia Pacific and Latin America and the Caribbean. This project is but the latest example of the European Union's longstanding financial and political support for the NPT and for the work of my office.

I would also like to thank the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) for its close cooperation in these events, including in formulating their programmes. We have been fortunate to be able to count on the IAEA to provide experts for the regional meetings as well as the thematic seminars on pillars II and III.

As it says in the title, non-proliferation is central to the Treaty. And in this regard, the NPT has been remarkably good at its job. Whereas in the 1960s, many feared the rise of more than a dozen nuclear-armed States, the spread of nuclear weapons has been greatly constrained. This is largely thanks to the legally binding obligations contained in the NPT and implemented through the IAEA-administered safeguards regime.

However, proliferation concerns continue to challenge the regime, including, worryingly, in regions where there is already a history of armed conflict. We can all agree that the spread of nuclear weapons to a greater number of States increases the likelihood of their use. A continued commitment to the highest non-proliferation standards is in all of our interest.

Threats to the non-proliferation regime continue to evolve. Reduced technical barriers to delivery systems, intangible technology transfers facilitated by improved communication technology, and enhanced black market networks are just some examples of proliferation in the twenty-first century.

Just as the threats to non-proliferation do not remain static, nor can the regime. Safeguards need to evolve to ensure the international community can remain confident that all nuclear material remains in peaceful uses and that there are no undeclared nuclear programmes.

Over the next two days, you will have the opportunity to discuss some of the most pertinent issues related to pillar II – IAEA safeguards, safeguards-related challenges and opportunities posed by new technologies, nuclear security, nuclear supply arrangements, regional issues and nuclear-weapon-free zones. The impact of new technologies will be a particularly important area to explore if the safeguards regime is to continue to evolve and adapt to the realities of the 21st century.

Non-proliferation makes the world a safer and more secure place for everyone. Moreover, non-proliferation and disarmament are inextricably linked – they are two sides of the same coin. Compliance with non-proliferation lays the ground for further disarmament measures. Conversely, non-compliance undermines mutual trust and makes forward progress harder to achieve.

Thanks to the support of the European Union and an unprecedented level of engagement by the Chairs of the sessions of the Preparatory Committee and the President-designate, this Review Conference will have been preceded by a historic level of regional and thematic engagement. With the opening of the Review Conference approaching rapidly, I hope you will make use of this opportunity to share your views on the various topics, and to have frank discussions about what action the Conference should take with regard to pillar II. It is important to look for areas of convergence, but also to be honest and clear about areas where differences remain.

I thank you very much for your attention.