



**United Nations Office
for Disarmament Affairs**

Opening remarks for regional consultations for States Parties to the NPT*

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As delivered



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Distinguished Delegates,

I have the honour to deliver these remarks on behalf of Ms. Izumi Nakamitsu, Under-Secretary-General and High Representative for Disarmament Affairs.

Excellencies,

Ladies and gentlemen,

It is a privilege to join you here in Addis Ababa for these regional consultations for States Parties to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons. I wish to express my sincere gratitude to the Government of Ethiopia and to the United Nations Economic Commission for Africa for hosting and supporting this meeting.

I also thank the European Union for its generous support, which has made these consultations possible.

Allow me as well to congratulate His Excellency Ambassador Do Hung Viet on his election as President-designate of the 2026 Review Conference. His leadership will be essential as we approach a pivotal moment in the Treaty's history. On behalf of the UN Office for Disarmament Affairs, let me say how grateful we are to be in such good hands.

Ladies and gentlemen,

The architecture of multilateral cooperation is under strain. Geopolitical tensions are rising, while dialogue among nuclear-weapon States has stalled. Decades of hard-won progress in nuclear disarmament and non-proliferation - progress that has vastly contributed to global stability - are being seriously challenged.

A qualitative nuclear arms race is underway, and the risk of a quantitative one looms large. All elements of the regime, including the NPT, are under pressure.

The NPT, long the cornerstone of global stability, now faces deepening divisions and distrust among States Parties. Preserving the Treaty and with it, international peace and security, begins with a renewed collective commitment by States Parties.

A third consecutive Review Conference without consensus may not immediately invalidate the Treaty, but it could lead to a “hollowing out” of the regime as States lose confidence in its ability to deliver across all three pillars.

Since the Treaty’s indefinite extension in 1995, its credibility has rested on the mutually reinforcing nature of the three pillars. When one is weakened, the others inevitably suffer. Preserving this balance, therefore, is essential.

This is why the 2026 Review Conference is so important. It provides an opportunity not only to reaffirm long-standing commitments, but to chart a practical and forward-looking pathway to strengthen the Treaty for the years ahead.

Achieving this will require political will, flexibility and a renewed sense of collective responsibility.

These consultations are designed to support that process. They offer space for open, regionally focused dialogue and for identifying areas where convergence is possible.

They are an opportunity to articulate priorities, share concerns and lay the groundwork for a constructive and realistic outcome next year. The President-designate has emphasized his commitment to an inclusive and listening approach, and these consultations are an integral part of that effort.

While views may differ among States on what success should look like, we know that flexibility, creativity and a commitment to constructive engagement will be indispensable.

Excellencies,

The substance of the NPT's pillars is integral to the maintenance of international peace and increasingly to sustainable development.

Across Africa, disarmament is not an abstract concept. Communities affected by nuclear testing continue to bear humanitarian and environmental consequences. The Treaty of Pelindaba, which established the African Nuclear-Weapon-Free Zone, reflects the region's longstanding commitment to security without nuclear weapons.

Over the last three decades, NPT States Parties have agreed to significant nuclear disarmament commitments. As we look toward 2026, a key priority will be advancing the implementation of those commitments. The catastrophic humanitarian and environmental consequences of any nuclear weapon use demand urgent measures to reduce risks. Enhanced communication, greater transparency and restraint in doctrine are essential.

Nuclear non-proliferation remains indispensable for international peace and security. Africa's nuclear landscape is diverse, encompassing uranium-producing States, emerging users of nuclear technology and States working to strengthen scientific and regulatory capacities. This diversity underscores the value of effective nuclear safeguards. Africa's consistent advocacy for universality and its longstanding commitment to non-proliferation norms remain invaluable to the integrity of the Treaty.

Emerging developments, including those related to the next generation of nuclear reactors, require sustained attention. The 2026 Review Conference will need to address these matters carefully, ensuring that innovation advances in a safe, secure and proliferation-resistant manner.

The peaceful uses of nuclear energy deliver tangible benefits for sustainable development. Across the continent, nuclear science and technology are contributing across the continent to health, agriculture, water management, climate resilience and clean energy.

The Review Conference should reaffirm the importance of equitable access to these benefits for all States Parties, particularly developing countries, along with the highest standards of safety, security and non-proliferation. Continued investment in capacity-building, cooperation and partnerships will be critical.

Regional cooperation also plays a vital role. Africa's strong tradition of collective approaches provides a solid foundation for advancing the peaceful uses pillar. Institutions such as the African Union and AFCONE contribute to this broader effort by reinforcing cooperation, building trust and supporting the region's commitment to the principles of the Pelindaba Treaty.

Excellencies,

The forthcoming Review Conference is a moment to renew commitment, rebuild trust and strengthen the foundations of the Treaty. There is no template for a successful outcome. What matters is that the outcome strengthens the NPT and the confidence that sustains it.

Every State Party has a stake in this effort, and every region – including Africa – brings essential perspectives, energy and political will. The NPT has endured for more than fifty years because it has adapted to changing circumstances. It must do so again, guided by realism, determination and shared responsibility.

Let us therefore use these consultations to listen to one another, reflect honestly on the challenges before us and to work together toward a strengthened NPT in 2026 and beyond.

I wish you productive deliberations and look forward to the insights and recommendations that will emerge from your discussions.

Thank you very much for your attention.