



**“Tilling the Frozen Ground for a Disarmament Spring”
Side event organized by Mayors for Peace and UNIDIR**

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As delivered



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Your Excellency, Mayor Matsui,

Excellencies,

Distinguished Delegates,

Ladies and gentlemen,

I am pleased to be with you this morning.

My sincere thanks and appreciation go to Mayors for Peace and to UNIDIR colleagues for their engagement and efforts, including in bringing us together today.

As the NPT Review Conference begins, it is evident that the challenges before us have only intensified over the past year.

The global security environment continues to deteriorate, conflicts are deepening, and the risk of nuclear weapons being used, whether intentionally or through miscalculation, has grown more acute. Cynicism surrounding the regime has increased.

Yet, in taking stock of the Treaty, it seems clear to me that the NPT remains a collective priority. It continues to serve as the cornerstone of the global nuclear disarmament and non-proliferation architecture, providing an indispensable foundation for international peace and security at a time when the broader multilateral system is under strain.

Much of the NPT's enduring value lies in its near-universal framework of legally binding commitments. It contains a legally-binding commitment to nuclear disarmament; it affirms the right of non-nuclear-weapon States to pursue peaceful uses of nuclear energy; and it establishes verifiable non-proliferation obligations.

In short, it creates both a political and legal bridge between nuclear-weapon and non-nuclear-weapon States. But that bridge depends on confidence that all three pillars of the Treaty – disarmament, non-proliferation, and peaceful uses – and that confidence depends on measurable progress being made.

Ladies and gentlemen,

Recent trends pose serious challenges for the regime and for this Review Conference.

Nuclear-armed States are modernizing their arsenals and developing new delivery systems, raising the prospect of renewed arms racing.

The erosion of long-standing arms control and risk-reduction agreements has reduced transparency and predictability, increasing the risk of miscalculation.

Disarmament progress has stalled, and frustration among non-nuclear-weapon States has deepened.

Regional proliferation crises persist, and emerging technologies, such as cyber capabilities, artificial intelligence, and space systems, may both benefit and complicate verification, as well as introduce new pathways for escalation.

All of this is unfolding amid broader strains on multilateralism and trust, making consensus more difficult to achieve.

Yet despite these challenges, the next four weeks do offer meaningful opportunities.

Nuclear-weapon States can reaffirm their commitments under the Treaty, particularly those related to Article VI, and use this moment to re-engage diplomatically.

And all States Parties can work to reinforce the non-proliferation and disarmament architecture and safeguard the credibility of the NPT.

The Treaty can also serve as a vehicle for addressing long-standing regional challenges, including through renewed attention to the 1995 Middle East Resolution.

In closing, I would like to underscore that achieving a balanced, forward-looking outcome document would send a powerful signal that multilateral nuclear diplomacy remains possible.

The Review Conference should not be seen as an endpoint, but rather as an opportunity to set a realistic roadmap for the next review cycle and to prevent further erosion of the global disarmament and non-proliferation system.

I thank you very much for your attention.
