

**Second Meeting of States Parties to the
Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons (TPNW)**

New York, 27 November – 1 December 2023

**Statement by Susanne Riegraf, Deputy Federal Government Commissioner for
Disarmament, Nonproliferation and Arms Control**

Head of the German Observer Delegation to the 2nd MSP

Thank you Mr. President,

- **As a non-member to the TPNW and observer of this 2nd MSP, Germany would like to offer its perspective and engage in a serious and frank discussion on avenues for progress towards a safe world free of nuclear weapons.**

Excellencies, colleagues, Ladies and Gentlemen,

- **In our new National Security Strategy, Germany has reaffirmed its commitment to strive towards a safe world free of nuclear weapons. We share the global ambition to get there, and to redouble efforts to uphold the global arms control architecture, nuclear disarmament and non-proliferation on the basis of the NPT.**
- **However, in doing so, we must be mindful of the security situation in Europe and worldwide: Russia has not stopped its brutal war of aggression against its sovereign neighbor Ukraine since we all met in Vienna last year. Instead, Russia, in abuse of its power and status as a Nuclear Weapon State, has mercilessly continued to wage war against Ukraine, a Non-nuclear Weapon State that had voluntarily foregone its nuclear arsenal in return for extensive security guarantees by Russia in the Budapest Memorandum.**
- **What is more, Russia continues to dismantle the arms control architecture that had helped to foster security and strategic stability. Russia has completely disenfranchises the concept of trust and confidence-building of past decades.**
- **Throughout this year, we have seen Russia suspending New START and - irresponsibly in the current tense security environment - announcing the deployment of nuclear weapons to Belarus. Russia has also only recently revoked its ratification of the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty.**

- Neither the TPNW, nor the NPT have stopped Russia walking away from its international commitments and spurning international arms control efforts. But international arms control fora, including this Meeting of States' Parties, need to be explicit and call out Russia as a major obstacle to disarmament efforts.
- They should also keep stock of China's ongoing nuclear build-up. China urgently needs to create transparency about its nuclear policy.

Chair,

- Confronted with an openly aggressive Russia, the importance of nuclear deterrence has increased for many states, including for my country. Germany, as a NATO member, is fully committed to NATO's nuclear deterrence, the purpose of which is to preserve peace, deter aggression and prevent nuclear coercion.
- As long as nuclear weapons exist, NATO will remain a nuclear Alliance. Germany will not accede to the TPNW, which would collide with our national security interests and our membership in NATO including nuclear deterrence.
- Let me also clearly state that as non-member to the TPNW we are not bound by its provisions, nor do we accept the claim that its provisions are applicable under customary law – neither now nor in the future.
- Nuclear deterrence and a commitment to arms control can go hand in hand, as we have outlined in NATO's Strategic Concept. Another proof of that is the repeated unconditional offer for dialogue on strategic stability and arms control with Russia made by the United States throughout this year. However, Russia is not engaging in such dialogue and continues to pursue further steps away from arms control efforts.
- A serious discussion on arms control and disarmament can and should not apply one standard to all states, including Nuclear Weapons States under the NPT, but needs to differentiate; taking into account efforts of dialogue and risk reduction on the one hand, and irresponsible and reckless behavior by Russia or the ongoing nuclear build-up by China on the other.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

- The NPT remains the irreplaceable framework for nuclear disarmament and non-proliferation. We must all acknowledge that nuclear disarmament and nuclear non-proliferation are highly interdependent and that progress

towards one goal also benefits the other. That is why it is of such importance to us to counter the growing polarization between the members of this all-important treaty and to build bridges between all responsible stake-holders of nuclear disarmament while taking into account the current security environment and necessary deterrence and defense.

- We are encouraged that the members of the TPNW have during the 10th NPT RevCon and this year's PrepCom meeting declared their support of the NPT.
- Importantly, this year's NPT Working Group showed that States Parties are in favor of Strengthening the Review Process. Crucially, the work in this group, on the issues of transparency and accountability, was advanced by both, non-members and members of the TPNW.
- Germany strongly believes that cooperation is possible across the present divides. The Stockholm Initiative and the Non-Proliferation and Disarmament Initiative – Germany is a member of both – illustrate that supporters and opponents of the TPNW can work together to achieve common goals.
- We are ready to continue this dialogue and to seek common ground with all members to the NPT on ways and topics to turn this current NPT Review Cycle into a success.

Chair,

- As Foreign Minister Annalena Baerbock stressed before the NPT Review Conference last year, Germany is committed to engaging in exploring opportunities for practical cooperation on the humanitarian perspective. In this light, we supported the KAZ / Kiribati resolution on “Addressing the Legacy of Nuclear Weapons: Providing Victim Assistance and Environmental Remediation to Member States Affected by the Use or Testing of Nuclear Weapons” in this year's First Committee.
- We have stated at last year's MSP that we believe that the provision of victims assistance and environmental remediation from the damages of nuclear testing deserve broader attention and engagement.
- Accordingly, we have explored avenues and prospects for engagement in these fields. We intend to support concrete project work on victims assistance and environmental remediation.
- This includes inter alia, support for international cooperation and workshops on victims assistance and environmental remediation, statistical research on

the effects of nuclear testing, feminist perspectives on victims assistance as well as further research on the effects of radiation on women and girls.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

- Since last year, the gap between the aspiration of a nuclear-weapon free world and the present reality has become wider, not narrower. In light of this, we must honestly discuss what our priorities should be as we try to make progress towards a safe world free of nuclear weapons.
- In Germany's view, some of the top priorities for nuclear disarmament are:
 - Protecting the nuclear testing taboo, in particular in light of Russia's recently announced revocation of its CTBT ratification.
 - Continuing efforts to counter the proliferation crises around Iran and the DPRK's nuclear and ballistic missile programmes.
 - Protecting the nuclear non-proliferation regime with the NPT at its cornerstone, including by seeking better ways to implement Art. VI. This should include measures of risk-reduction, increased transparency of nuclear arsenals as well as advancing international efforts on nuclear disarmament verification and irreversibility of nuclear disarmament.
 - Ensuring the universal application of the highest IAEA safeguards standard – with the CSA plus the Additional Protocol.
 - Call on Russia to return to dialogue with the United States on strategic stability, including return to full implementation of the current New START treaty and negotiations of a follow-on treaty.
 - More engagement and dialogue with China, which should assume its responsibility to commit to arms control negotiations and to open up to more transparency on its arsenals.
- The list of action points is long. But it leaves ample room for Nuclear and Non-Nuclear Weapon States, for TPNW supporters and – critics alike to engage in common endeavors to support the NPT process. Germany is looking forward to engaging with you all towards this goal.
- I thank you, Mr. President.