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Emerging opportunities for nuclear disarmament

Ladies and gentlemen,

It is a great pleasure to be here today and to address this audience of dedicated, motivated, and knowledgeable experts in the field of nuclear non-proliferation and disarmament.

Addressing the Pugwash conference has a special significance for me as a Norwegian politician. The Pugwash Conferences on Science and World Affairs was awarded the Nobel Peace Prize in 1995 for their efforts to diminish the role of nuclear arms in international politics. This prize is presented by the Norwegian Nobel Committee in the city hall of Oslo every year. It is a significant event honouring people and organisations that have made great efforts in the field of peace and security.

It is also a great pleasure to be in Canada – a country which has a lot in common with my country, including a joint commitment for non-proliferation, arms control and disarmament. I feel privileged to have the opportunity to address you today.

Allow me to begin by recapturing some recent history, and present some current challenges. After the collapse of the Soviet Union great progress has been made with regard to nuclear disarmament and reductions in

nuclear arsenals of the major nuclear powers. Both Russia and the US have carried out large cuts in their weapons arsenals and engaged in closer cooperation on disarmament and securing nuclear material. The end of the Cold War also ended the stalemate in the United Nations Security Council, and enhanced the belief in multilateral solutions. The Nuclear Non-proliferation Treaty (NPT) achieved almost universal adherence and was extended indefinitely in 1995. In 1996 the Comprehensive Nuclear Test-Ban Treaty (CTBT) was signed. South Africa abandoned its nuclear weapons programme, and nuclear weapons deployed in the former Soviet republics Kazakhstan, Belarus and Ukraine were either dismantled or transferred to Russia.

Despite all the positive developments in the 1990s, there is still much work to be done in promoting peace and disarmament. The need for organisations such as Pugwash and Parliamentarians for Nuclear Non-Proliferation and Disarmament (PNND) is as obvious today as it has been in the past. The prospect of increased nuclear proliferation is again of great concern. It has placed a new premium on the need to strengthen the nuclear non-proliferation regime and our resolve in disarmament issues. Although an ambitious vision – a world free of nuclear weapons is a goal we must all work towards.

As the Norwegian Minister of Defence I receive regular briefings on the large concentrations of nuclear weapons close to my nation's borders. This has raised my awareness of the dangers posed by nuclear weapons, as well as the efforts put into developing and maintaining the nuclear arsenal.

Today, the world's attention is to a large extent focused on climate change, food insecurity, and the increased strain on the world's natural resources. These issues were rightly put on top of the agenda of the

recent G8 meeting. The many challenges posed by climate change are obvious to countries located on the Arctic rim, such as Norway and Canada. Despite the serious nature of these challenges, we should not lose sight of the continued and increasing danger posed by nuclear weapons.

Traditional security challenges and traditional power structures are transforming, with new global actors demanding a greater role. Current Arms Control Agreements are under pressure. The treaty on Conventional Forces in Europe (CFE) is currently put on hold, and the future of the Intermediate Range Nuclear Forces Treaty (INF) has been questioned.

We see signs of increasing international tension and increased efforts in development, production and stockpiling of weapons. The number of nuclear-weapon states has increased since the end of the Cold War.

There remains a danger that more states will attempt to acquire nuclear weapons. New global power structures have emerged, with the danger of nuclear weapons acquiring a more prominent role in this development. India and Pakistan carried out nuclear tests in 1998 and we have seen nuclear ambitions in countries such as North Korea and Iran. The nuclear balance is delicate. The advent of new nuclear-armed states in areas of tension will most probably result in further spread of nuclear weapons.

With this in mind, it is clear that we must do our utmost to counter proliferation and to prevent nuclear weapons from acquiring a prominent role in the new global security environment.

First and foremost - nuclear disarmament requires a robust and credible non-proliferation regime. The Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty (NPT) is a

cornerstone of international nuclear disarmament efforts. It provides us with a vision for the total elimination of nuclear weapons.

The vision of the NPT reframed the nuclear landscape. States could foresee a future in which their neighbours, their enemies, their partners might decide against going nuclear. They inferred that the prestige previously associated with nuclear weapons might be declining rather than increasing. They could consider options for achieving security by other means.

We have to bear in mind that the NPT did not make anyone believe that full nuclear disarmament could be achieved immediately. But it did entail a solid commitment not just to contain, but to roll back the nuclear threat.

We must continue to support and strengthen the non-proliferation and disarmament regime established in the NPT. Article Six of the NPT places the obligation to bring about disarmament on all states. No doubt, states with the largest arsenals have a leading role to play. This puts a particular responsibility on the two major nuclear powers, Russia and the United States. But only by advancing non-proliferation and disarmament together, by strengthening multilateral cooperation and by working on reliable verification tools and collective security arrangements together, will our vision be achieved.

The use of civilian nuclear technology is on the rise and many states today are rapidly accumulating the technology, know-how and infrastructure to develop a domestic nuclear fuel cycle capability. This technology can also be used to develop nuclear weapons.

We must therefore move toward cooperative international arrangements for the reliable and affordable system for supply of nuclear fuel.

However, we must recognise that fuel cycle assurances will succeed only with a non-discriminatory approach that recognises the right of all states to peaceful use, and the need of all states for energy security. As a first step, my Government has pledged 5 million US dollars to the establishment of a fuel bank under the auspices of the IAEA.

In addition, my government has supported international efforts to minimize the use of highly enriched uranium in the civilian sector.

Focused diplomacy by major powers is still one of the most effective measures in disarmament. The case of North Korea is an example of what hard-nosed diplomacy at its best can achieve: Almost two years ago, the nuclear test carried out by North Korea was condemned. Now we welcome the real prospect of a de-nuclearised Korean Peninsula. Major nuclear powers, including the United States and China, have played the key role in this development. We should strive for a negotiated political solution to the dispute over Iran's nuclear activities and ensure the complete dismantling of North Korea's nuclear weapons programme.

However, it is not enough for us who are non-nuclear weapon states to call on nuclear-weapon states to fulfil the vision of a world free of nuclear weapons. Progress will require all states to play an active and constructive role.

Disarmament and non-proliferation remains high on my government's agenda. We want to strengthen Norway's role as an active promoter of arms control and disarmament.

At the end of May the Norwegian Government put forth a parliamentary white paper addressing these issues. A major element of the white paper is how we should work towards the vision of a world free of weapons of mass destruction. A world without nuclear, chemical and biological weapons would clearly be a safer world. Getting there will require legally binding and verifiable agreements that involve all countries. It is clear that it will take time to reach this objective. It is therefore important to start with practical and not least do-able steps. Indeed some of these measures have been on the international arms control agenda for years. It is now high time to make real progress.

- We must consolidate the norm against nuclear testing and secure the entry into force of the Comprehensive Test Ban Treaty (CTBT). Until the treaty enters into force, the existing moratorium on nuclear testing should be maintained and even strengthened. A practical way to do this is to ensure that the establishment of the International Monitoring System gets the necessary funding.
- We must negotiate a fissile cut-off-treaty to help prevent nuclear arms races in the 21st century.
- We must continue to reduce the operational status of nuclear weapons.
- We must increase our efforts to discourage and prevent proliferation. A key element in this respect is strengthening the International Atomic Energy Agency's (IAEA) ability to ensure that the NPT states fulfill their non-proliferation obligations. It is vital to ensure that the IAEA has the necessary resources to carry out its verification tasks. Securing political and financial support for the IAEA has long been a Norwegian priority.

- And finally - non-nuclear-weapon states must cooperate with nuclear-weapon states to develop the technology needed for verifying disarmament. Norway cooperates with the UK on strengthening disarmament verification.

Norway provides considerable funding for the dismantlement of nuclear submarines and for securing nuclear and radioactive materials in Russia. Norway will continue to work on a bilateral basis: Norway and Russia cooperate on enhancing nuclear safety and security in northwestern Russia.

Norway has enhanced its co-operation with relevant research institutions world-wide. We have allocated more than 5 million US dollar for a research project on how to move the arms control agenda forward. We hope to see concrete results such as the entry into force for the nuclear weapons free zones for Africa. In addition, we must re-new our efforts to reach a zone free of weapons of mass destruction and their means of delivery in the Middle East.

Internationally, we have voiced a concern for new arms races. Norway's position on territorial missile defence is well known. We recognise the threat of ballistic missiles and agree that Missile Defence can provide protection for a territory. However, enhanced protection does not necessarily enhance overall security. It is essential to prevent that the development of missile defence systems leads to a new arms race. Our answer to the growing missile threat must be a broad and comprehensive effort, including strengthening non-proliferation and arms control. Norway will continue to be a strong advocate for this policy. On a related note – let me add that serious issues of arms control in general – and missile defence in particular – should not be used to further national

agendas. The recent strong Russian rhetoric on the US-Czech agreement was in this regard unhelpful.

If we are to make progress in forging an international consensus on nuclear disarmament and non-proliferation, we must work in innovative ways.

We need to mobilize will at all levels – not least political will – to move forward. In 2005, Norway initiated the seven-nation initiative on nuclear disarmament and non-proliferation. The initiative includes nations as different as Australia, Chile, Indonesia, Norway, Romania, South Africa and the United Kingdom. This diversity demonstrates that we are able to challenge previous conventional wisdom, and to reach out across dividing lines to create new partnerships for change.

In February my government co-hosted an international conference in Oslo on achieving the vision of a world free of nuclear weapons. This conference was organised in cooperation with the Nuclear Threat Initiative, the Hoover Institution at Stanford University and the Norwegian Radiation Protection Authority. Conference participants included IAEA Director General Mohamed El Baradei, former U.S. Secretary of State George Shultz, former U.S. Senator Sam Nunn and more than 100 participants from 29 countries.

Indeed the active contribution by former US statesmen and policy leaders has given our disarmament efforts a new impetus. From their perspective, disarmament serves national security interests. That is important to remember. I hope and believe that the outcome from Oslo can be an inspiration for us all.

We believe that persistent and well-informed partnerships like these, which include government and civil society, is essential to address the complex challenge before us.

Let us be clear. Very few, if any, non-nuclear states believe that full nuclear disarmament is possible overnight.

There is a short-sighted assumption that, because we have been spared an all out nuclear war to date, because no acts of nuclear terrorism have yet been executed, the status quo is somehow secure.

That, my friends, is our Achilles heel: the false assumption that status quo is less risky than change.

Ladies and gentlemen,

To address today's pressing challenges, we need the contributions of more than one – we need the efforts of many.

It all amounts to future security for every state and every individual.

My guiding principle in politics is that mankind itself makes its own history. We have to ask ourselves the question: What is it that we want? What kind of world do we want to live in?

History has shown that small and medium-sized countries can make a difference. Consider the Mine ban Convention – the result of *the Ottawa process* – or the recently agreed convention on cluster munitions causing unacceptable humanitarian harm.

The latter came after an intensive 15 month process, which was initiated by Norway in February 2007. 111 states – including Canada I am happy to say – agreed on the convention banning cluster munitions. I believe a lot can be learned from this process, by many called the Oslo process.

Not only because the ban in itself represents the beginning of the end for a weapon that has caused a vast number of civilian casualties, as well as long-term developmental problems, in the areas where these weapons have been used. As we know, this may in itself represent a threat to international peace and security. We can also learn a great deal from the process itself.

First of all, because the process shows how it is possible, even for small states, to put issues on the international agenda, and to create an arena where such matters can be effectively dealt with.

Secondly, we see it as yet another proof of the potential that lies in the partnership between states and civil society (NGO's) to take action and mobilize the necessary political will to address important humanitarian questions.

And finally, but perhaps most significantly, we have seen how an international process and the worldwide attention that this creates in itself can contribute to the stigmatization of the use of a particular weapon, to such an extent that I believe it will be politically very difficult to use cluster munitions ever again, even for the very few States that choose not to ratify the Convention. The experience from the Mine Ban Convention clearly shows that the adoption of the Cluster Munitions Convention represents not only a legal obligation for the States that formally ratify it, but the beginning of an evolving international norm that cannot be ignored by any State.

While recognising that we cannot blue-copy the approach chosen for other arms control efforts, I remain convinced that we can do something now in addressing the nuclear threat. We can help make it safer, more secure and more stable. We can make a difference. It will take an unprecedented effort to set a common course – for all of us – to seize new opportunities, awaken old promises and shoulder the challenges ahead. Opportunities are laced with challenges, and the way we move forward will determine the success or demise of our efforts.

Facts tell us that we must take action. Events tell us that we must act as one. History has told us to involve all stake-holders, including civil society. It is crucial to find common ground and move forward – now.