

**His Excellency Mr. Stjepan Mesic',
President of the Republic of Croatia**

(spoke in Croatian, English text provided by the delegation)

It is a great honour for me to present, on behalf of the Republic of Croatia, our views on the issue that has been put on the agenda of today's meeting.

I take this opportunity to pay tribute to the United States and to you personally, President Obama, for the initiative to discuss in the Security Council the very delicate issue of nuclear non-proliferation.

If this meeting brings us just one step forward on the path towards a world free of nuclear weapons - a world that you, President Obama, have in a visionary manner set as the objective to which we should aspire - then we will have succeeded. I emphasize that even if we get only one single step closer to this objective we will indeed have succeeded, because the journey towards a world free of nuclear weapons is not, cannot be and will not be easy, simple or short. This, however, does not mean that we should give up or allow despondency to rule our thoughts and deeds - quite the contrary.

The world was faced with nuclear weapons 54 years ago. The horrendous effects of their use imposed the need to start almost immediately to reflect on how to limit their proliferation, which was also the objective of a set of international treaties. However, in spite of all those efforts, today we live in a world where there are 10 or so nuclear Powers, recognized or unrecognized. I deliberately use the term "Powers", because possession of a single nuclear bomb makes the country that possesses it a Power, if one considers the consequences of its potential use - to say nothing of the fact that the present-day world is burdened with the evil of international terrorism, or what it would mean if a terrorist group were to get hold of nuclear weapons.

What we should do here today, as my country sees it, is to reinforce the role of the United Nations, without the least intention of replacing any institution or forum dealing with non-proliferation, and, unanimously and jointly, and taking into consideration earlier documents of the Security Council and the General Assembly, to state the following: On the one hand, great efforts are needed to attain, first, non-proliferation of nuclear weapons followed by

nuclear disarmament. On the other hand, at the same time, every country must be guaranteed its right to the peaceful use of nuclear energy - if necessary with even more stringent measures of universally accepted international control.

Let me be more precise: we have to work together to affirm or establish principles that will help us to head towards a world free of nuclear weapons without necessarily entering into debate over this or that concrete issue.

There are other things that we have to do. First, we must unreservedly support a multilateral contractual system related to nuclear arms control and disarmament which includes strict implementation and strengthened verification of contractual obligations. Secondly, we must call upon all members of the world Organization to contribute to activities aimed at preventing the abuse of existing treaties and at strengthening anti-proliferation efforts and resources.

Efforts focused first on limitation of nuclear weapons, then on reduction and finally on disarmament have a long history. They have, however, gained a new and strong impetus since the announcement by the United States President that his ultimate objective is a world free of nuclear weapons. Because of that declaration our task today is to send a message to the world, which has authorized us to act here, that there is political will for the pursuit of a policy providing all countries with security without nuclear weapons.

We would thereby also respond to the longstanding efforts of participants in the campaign for a nuclear-free world. Among them I include the Secretary-General, non-governmental organizations, civil society, current and former political leaders, parliamentarians, scholars, trade unions and students. Our objective is peace in security. This objective cannot be reached if the threat of nuclear weapons exists. The decades of the cold war - when admittedly, thanks to the balance of fear, we had global peace, but not security - are the best proof that this is so.

The Republic of Croatia is prepared to make its maximum contribution to efforts aimed at achieving this objective. As a member of the generation that experienced the Second World War, and remembering

all later local wars and crises that threatened world peace, I can just add that this is something that we owe to those who come after us. When we leave, let us bequeath to them a better world - a world free of nuclear weapons.