



## THE HOLY SEE

### FIRST PREPARATORY COMMITTEE FOR THE 2015 REVIEW CONFERENCE OF THE PARTIES TO THE TREATY ON THE NON-PROLIFERATION OF NUCLEAR WEAPONS Vienna, April 30 – May 11, 2012

Mr. Chairman,

1. I have the honour to deliver this Statement in the name of His Excellency Archbishop Dominique Mamberti, Secretary for the Holy See's Relations with States. The Delegation of the Holy See warmly congratulates you, Ambassador Peter Woolcott, on your appointment as Chairman of this Preparatory Committee. I assure you of the Holy See's support.

Above all, I have the honour of conveying to you, Mr. Chairman and to all the distinguished participants in this First Preparatory Committee for the 2015 Review Conference of the Parties to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons the best wishes and cordial greetings of His Holiness Pope Benedict XVI. Just over a year ago, on the occasion of the presentation of the Letters of Credence of the new Ambassador of Japan to the Holy See, Pope Benedict said: *"The memory of the sombre episode [of Hiroshima and Nagasaki] in the history of humanity becomes more poignant every year, while those who witnessed this horror are disappearing. This tragedy insistently reminds us of how necessary it is to persevere in the effort for the non-proliferation of nuclear weapons and for disarmament. The nuclear weapon remains a major source of concern. Possession of it and the risk of its possible use give rise to tensions and distrust in many of the world's regions"* (Address of His Holiness Pope Benedict XVI to H.E. Mr. Hidekazu Yamaguchi, New Ambassador of Japan to the Holy See, Saturday 27 November 2010).

2. With this Preparatory Committee we embark on a journey whose primary goal is to prepare fertile ground so that the IX Review Conference of the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons, scheduled for 2015, will produce consistent and encouraging results not only for strengthening the Treaty itself, but also for making it a more effective instrument in responding to the new challenges that are continually emerging on the nuclear horizon. While the adoption of the Action Plan at the 2010 Review Conference was widely

regarded as a success, its long-term impact will depend on the implementation by the NPT member states. Nevertheless, its sometimes broad formulations, lack of specific targets and deadlines on most of the action items, and possible differences in interpretation pose significant challenges for review and assessment, to which the Holy See would like to contribute with the following reflections.

3. A first element for our reflection is the recognition of the strong bonds that exist between nuclear disarmament and nuclear non-proliferation: they are interdependent and mutually reinforcing and their transparent and responsible implementation represents one of the principal instruments not only in the fight against nuclear terrorism, but also in the concrete realization of a culture of life and of peace capable of promoting in an effective way the integral development of peoples. Despite steps for decades, we still have a profusion of nuclear weapons. The Holy See believes there needs to be a binding together of steps into a coherent commitment to eliminate nuclear weapons in clearly defined phases for an incremental disarmament. Only the visible expression of an intent to construct a global legal basis for the systematic elimination of all nuclear weapons will suffice. It cannot be considered morally sufficient to draw down the stocks of superfluous nuclear weapons while modernizing nuclear arsenals and investing vast sums to ensure their future production and maintenance. This current course will ensure the perpetuation of these weapons indefinitely. For these reasons, the Holy See regards the Non-Proliferation Treaty as the cornerstone of the global nuclear non-proliferation regime, as the basis to pursue nuclear disarmament and as an important element for guaranteeing the inalienable rights of States Parties to develop research, production and use of nuclear technology for peaceful purposes. Since the NPT is the only multilateral legal instrument currently available, intended to bring about a nuclear weapons free world, it must never be allowed to be weakened.

Closely related to the NPT is the entry into force of the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty (CTBT) and the ratification of all States, in particular nuclear-weapon States, of the respective Protocols to the Nuclear-Weapon-Free Zones Treaties. In this regard, the Holy See restates its strong support for the efforts to establish such a zone in the Middle East. Nuclear-Weapon-Free Zones (NWFZ) are the best example of trust, confidence and affirmation that peace and security are possible without possessing nuclear weapons.

4. A second element for reflection, inevitably connected with the preceding one, is the need to create within this forum a climate of confidence and real cooperation. There is a growing awareness of how the interests of national security are deeply connected with the interests of international security. In acknowledging this interdependence, it thus becomes all the more

evident how the NPT represents a fundamental pillar in nuclear non-proliferation, furnishing the legal basis not only for international verification on nuclear material, under the auspices of the International Atomic Energy Agency, but also for the elimination of nuclear weapons.

In this context, the Holy See would like to reiterate its constant support in the search for political solutions that not only make it possible to prevent the proliferation of nuclear weapons, but also to prevent war from being seen as a means to resolve conflicts between nations and between peoples. Furthermore, the Holy See encourages all the nations to weave patiently the economic and political bonds of peace that stand like a rampart against every claim of recourse to arms and that make it possible to promote the integral human development of all the peoples (cf. Address of Pope Benedict XVI at the General Audience, 5 May 2010). A part of the sums allocated for weapons could be redeployed for the development of economic, educational and health-care projects. This would undoubtedly contribute to the inner stability of the country and to stability among peoples (cf. Pope Benedict XVI, Encyclical Letter *Caritas in veritate*, n. 29). Now, in these times of the precarious situation of the market and of employment, the need to find reliable funding for development remains a constant concern.

**5.** A third point for reflection is the need to raise awareness within the international community so that it might be more ambitious in making the NPT an adequate instrument in the promotion of peace and international security. It is becoming ever more clear that nuclear disarmament and non-proliferation of nuclear weapons must be addressed from a comprehensive approach.

In order to accomplish this an innovative approach on determining the legal, political and technical requirements to promote effectively the objectives of the NPT is called for. In this direction, an analysis and determination of practical steps is necessary so that these steps may more effectively respond to questions concerning, for example, verification and transparency of the activities of nuclear disarmament and non-proliferation, fissile material, negative security assurances, the nuclear fuel cycle, control of radioactive material, expansion of nuclear-weapons-free-zones, recognizing the value of the CTBT, and improving the governance of the NPT.

Nevertheless, these alone can never be the only response to that which is, above all, a matter pertaining to human nature. Threats to security come from attitudes and actions hostile to human nature. It is, therefore, on the human level that one must act – on the cultural and ethical level. If, in the short term, technical and legal measures are necessary for the advancement of the non-proliferation agenda, then, in the long-term, prevention measures are also called

for, measures that penetrate to the deepest cultural and social roots. What is absolutely necessary are programs of formation for the diffusion of a “culture of non-proliferation” both in the nuclear sector and in the public conscience in general. Security depends upon the State, but above all on the sense of responsibility of each person. For far too long, nuclear weapons have threatened humanity and there has not been sufficient political will toward removing this scourge. Now is the time for a profound rethinking and change in our perception of nuclear weapons. Nuclear disarmament and non-proliferation are essential from a humanitarian, from a human point of view.

Mr. Chairman,

6. At the end of his journey, the epic Greek hero Odysseus arrives at home but becomes involved in one more battle. However, in a crucial moment, Athena cries out: “Hold back, you men of Ithaca, back from brutal war! Break off – shed no more blood – make peace at once! Call a halt to the great leveler – war.” What did Odysseus do? “He obeyed her, glad at heart. And Athena handed down her pacts of peace between both sides for all the years to come” (*The Odyssey*, Book XXIV, 584-585; 598-600).

We cannot sit back passively and expect peace simply to be handed down to us. No, “*peace is more than the absence of war: it cannot be reduced to the maintenance of a balance of power between opposing forces nor does it arise out of despotic dominion, but it is appropriately called the work of justice....Peace will never be achieved once and for all, but must be built up continually*” (*Gaudium et Spes*, No. 78). The foundations of peace are built upon respect for human life and the primacy of the rule of law. The principal aim of the rule of law is, in fact, to substitute “the material force of arms with the moral force of law” (Benedict XV, Appeal to the Leaders of Peoples at War, August 1, 1917). These words might be able to enlighten the way that leads from Vienna 2012 to New York 2015 and the IX Review Conference of the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons.

Thank you, Mr. Chairman!