

Preparatory Committee for the 2026 Review Conference of the Parties to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons

2 August 2024

Original: English

Second session

Geneva, 22 July–2 August 2024

Towards 2026: reflections of the Chair of the 2024 session of the Preparatory Committee

Explanatory note

In 1998, at the second session of the Preparatory Committee for the 2000 Review Conference, it was proposed that a concise assessment on the state of the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons be prepared by the Chair of the Preparatory Committee to reflect on the current status of the implementation of the Treaty with a view to enhancing its authority, integrity and universality. One rationale being that it was important to pronounce on the importance of the Treaty annually at Preparatory Committee sessions in addition to the discussions and outcomes of quinquennial review conferences. Eventually, starting in 2017, the Chairs of the Preparatory Committee initiated the practice of issuing “Chair’s reflections”, and this useful practice continued in 2018, 2019 and 2023.

The Chair is pleased to maintain this practice and recommends that the Chair of the third Session and future Chairs of the Preparatory Committee sessions also continue this practice.

It is the Chair’s view that the following elements, inter alia, reflect some of the general sentiments of views in the discussions at the 2024 session of the Preparatory Committee for the eleventh Review Conference of the Parties to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons. It is the hope of the Chair that these could serve as a possible reference point for finding common ground to build further discussions in the current review cycle as it moves to formulate recommendations to the review conference scheduled for 2026.

Chair’s reflections: the state of the Non-Proliferation Treaty

1. The Non-Proliferation Treaty remains the essential near universal cornerstone of multilateral nuclear disarmament (pillar 1) and nuclear non-proliferation (pillar 2), and for facilitating cooperation in the peaceful uses of nuclear energy, including non-power applications (pillar 3).
2. The Treaty has shown itself to be a dynamic instrument, successfully adapting over the past five decades to changing political, technological, military and other circumstances while preserving its core authority and integrity. Today, the Treaty’s



ability to evolve and remain fit for purpose is of vital importance. States parties have demonstrated commitment to ensure the continuing integrity and relevance of all aspects of the Treaty and its strengthened review process.

3. Safeguards implementation has been rightfully entrusted by the Treaty and States parties to the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA), which has continued to work to evolve safeguards technologies and procedures to meet new technological challenges. All States parties with comprehensive safeguards agreements in force, as well as those with additional protocols, should ensure full cooperation with the Agency to enable it to provide the safeguards conclusions required by the Treaty and the Agency's safeguards system.

4. IAEA is deservedly recognized as the sole competent independent technical international authority responsible to verify and assure, in accordance with the Statute of the Agency and the Agency's safeguards system. Nothing should be done to undermine the authority and independence of IAEA in that regard. Full implementation of the Treaty builds confidence in achieving the elimination of nuclear weapons; assuring utilization of nuclear materials and technologies under IAEA safeguards for exclusively peaceful purposes; and promoting international cooperation for further development of the applications of nuclear energy for peaceful purposes, especially in the territories of non-nuclear-weapon States parties to the Treaty, with due consideration for the needs of the developing areas of the world, in accordance with the provisions of the Treaty.

5. Over the past two review cycles, the deteriorating international security situation has led to significant weakening of the nuclear disarmament architecture and seen the reinforcement of the role of nuclear weapons and a lack of progress in implementing the commitments agreed at the 1995, 2000 and 2010 Review Conferences. These trends must be reversed; full unambiguous implementation of the nuclear disarmament obligations and related commitments must be ensured without further delay.

6. Cooperation among States parties to achieve the full range of technological and developmental benefits of the peaceful applications of nuclear energy and nuclear science and technology should continue to ensure the highest standards of nuclear safety and nuclear security, under appropriate relevant controls and without undue restrictions. The Agency's "Atoms for Peace and Development" mandate supports States parties' efforts to reach the 17 Sustainable Development Goals set out in the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. In that context, nuclear science and technology contributes to meet the objectives of 9 of the 17 Goals in areas including energy, human health, food production, water management and environmental protection.

7. Implementation of the 1995 resolution on the establishment of a zone free of weapons of mass destruction in the region of the Middle East, remains unfinished business. Its full implementation must be a priority for all States parties. Practical new ideas, initiatives and genuine engagement by all stakeholders and States parties are essential to secure the implementation of the resolution.

8. Universal adherence to the Treaty remains an urgent priority. All States not yet parties to the Treaty are called upon to accede to the Treaty at the earliest date, particularly those States that operate unsafeguarded nuclear facilities. Every effort should be made by all States parties to achieve this objective.

9. Security assurances to non-nuclear weapon States parties to the Treaty reinforce both the nuclear disarmament and the nuclear non-proliferation objectives of the Treaty. The Security Council, in its resolutions [255 \(1968\)](#) and [984 \(1995\)](#), adopted unanimously on 19 June 1968 and 11 April 1995, respectively, as well as the

declarations of the nuclear-weapon States concerning security assurances in connection with nuclear-weapon-free zone treaties, should be fully respected. Further steps should be considered to assure non-nuclear-weapon States parties to the Treaty against the use or threat of use of nuclear weapons. These steps could take the form of an internationally legally binding instrument. Nuclear-weapon States should take every effort to ratify the relevant protocols to the treaties establishing nuclear-weapon-free zones and to engage in constructive dialogue on how to remove any reservations to those protocols to enable the full benefit of those treaties to their States parties.

10. Despite the prevailing international security situation and tensions, it is important that States parties enable “habits of dialogue” by maintaining an open, non-confrontational, inclusive and transparent dialogue at the meetings of the Review Conference and the sessions of the Preparatory Committee. States parties are encouraged to strive to make these deliberations as effective and efficient as possible, maximizing their coherence and continuity, ensuring results-based outcomes to keep the Treaty fit for purpose to meet new challenges as they arise. Civility in dialogue is essential.

11. Looking forward to the eleventh Review Conference, in 2026, States parties should coalesce to identify the areas where further progress can be achieved in strengthening the full implementation across all three pillars, as well as the authority, integrity and universality of the Treaty through realistic flexibility and compromises to agree on a relevant updated action plan for the next review cycle.

12. Despite best efforts, the Treaty’s strengthened review process has not been properly utilized to its full potential. Clearly this trend must be reversed; realistic benchmarks and timelines should be agreed for continuing actions to assure the full implementation of the Treaty, and in this regard States parties need to work assiduously for achieving successes and avoiding repeated failures that will erode the credibility of this essential Treaty.
