

Towards a world free from the nuclear weapons

Extract from the speech delivered by Minister of Foreign Affairs of Kazakhstan Mr. M. Tazhin at the plenary meeting of the Conference on Disarmament (Geneva, March 2008):

“...As an active participant to the disarmament process, Kazakhstan regrettably notes the lack of real progress the work of the Conference on Disarmament has been virtually paralyzed for the last decade. There is stagnation in the nuclear disarmament process. The international community failed to effectively solve the issues of disarmament and non-proliferation mostly due to the absence of consensus and political will.

First of all, it refers to the Non-Proliferation Treaty, the main instrument of the nuclear non-proliferation. The Treaty failed to prevent spreading of the nuclear weapons and appearing of the new de-facto nuclear countries. The threat of nuclear weapons to fall into the hands of terrorists has significantly increased. One saw no evidence of nuclear powers meeting their engagements on the reduction of their nuclear arsenals.

Inequality, which is set in the core of the Non-Proliferation Treaty, result in the fact, that nuclear powers see no point in observing disarmament obligations. This feeds destructive attitude, “feelings of unfairness of the NPT” in some regions of the world. The worst of it is that it gives serious arguments to those countries, which aspire to possess weapons of mass destruction.

In this regard, at the 62-nd Session of the U.N. General Assembly President Nursultan Nazarbayev called upon nuclear states to move towards a world free from the nuclear weapons thus creating example for others to follow, as well as to undertake measures on maintaining the NPT efficiency and strengthening the nuclear weapons non-proliferation regime.

We are convinced that it is necessary to develop mechanisms of effective leverage on the possessor-states acting outside of the NPT legal framework and provide instruments of putting pressure on those countries, which would try to leave the Treaty in the future.

Kazakhstan recognizes the importance of the work done by the USA and the Russian Federation on the Strategic Arms Reduction Treaty (START Treaty) to reduce their nuclear arsenals. Taking into consideration its expiration in 2009, it is necessary to speed up negotiation process on the prospects of the Treaty. In our opinion both new document or agreement should contain concrete measures on reduction of strategic delivery systems and nuclear warheads. We also welcome the practice within the Conference on Disarmament to discuss openly the status and pace of nuclear reductions. Nevertheless, it is not enough to ensure the irreversibility of the process. Much more efforts are needed to pave the way towards a nuclear weapon- free world.

Taking into consideration priorities of the disarmament agenda, Kazakhstan adheres to the realistic approach with regards to the situation at the Conference. Despite of

the lack of visible progress, we appreciate the efforts made over the two past years to craft what is known as the proposal of 2007 Presidents.

This proposal, as we understand, enjoys support of the majority of Conference members. For the sake of consensus we are ready to continue working on the basis of it.

We believe the initiative to start negotiations on draft Fissile Material Cut Off Treaty is well timed. We hope it could be an incentive for further progress towards nuclear disarmament.

At the same time this decision should not diminish the importance of other three core issues nuclear disarmament, prevention of an arms race in outer space (PAROS), and negative security assurances.

We highly appreciate the efforts of Russia and China on drafting the PAROS agreement and welcome its presentation.

Let me to remind you that Kazakhstan repeatedly proposed to draft an international obliging document against use or threat of use of the nuclear weapons against non-nuclear countries. We are interested in further discussion on negative security assurances, as it is closely related to the nuclear disarmament process. We firmly believe that non-nuclear members of the NPT have a legitimate right for negative security assurances.

Kazakhstan accumulated vast experience in working in a multilateral environment. This equally applies to the Conference on Disarmament. It is important to keep moving towards our common goal, as even small steps in the right direction can lead to great achievements..."

World community highly appreciates and respects Kazakhstan's non-nuclear choice the beginning of which lies in the decision to close Semipalatinsk nuclear polygon. We are confident in historic correctness of decision taken by the Head of our state and practical value of our experience for future human civilizations. As it was capaciously expressed by Ex - Secretary General of the UN Mr. Kofi Annan in his message to President Nursultan Nazarbaev "Decision to close polygon is a bright example of turning to the past the nuclear threat and aspiration of citizens to peace and disarmament. Voluntary rejection from owning nuclear weapons in 1991 and shutting down the nuclear test range brought a serious input in to the global effort of nuclear disarmament and non-proliferation - the goal that UN tries to reach from the moment of its creation, six decades ago".