

Third Session of the Preparatory Committee for the 2010 NPT Review Conference (New York, May 4-15, 2009)

Statement by H.E. Eric Danon, Ambassador, Permanent Representative of France to the Conference on Disarmament Head of the French Delegation

"General debate" (New York, 5th May 2009)

Mr Chairman,

1. The delegation of France fully associates itself with the statement made on behalf of the European Union by the Czech Presidency and with its words of congratulation addressed to you personally.
2. In the area of nuclear issues, the world is today experimenting an uneven period of mixed fear and hope.
3. Fear of seeing a growing number of countries overstep the nuclear threshold ; threat of seeing a weapon or nuclear materials fall into terrorist hands ; risk of seeing the international community react too weakly to these challenges which undermine the non-proliferation regime and seriously threaten international and regional security.
4. But also a great deal of hope : hope of substantial progress in the area of disarmament between the United States and Russia by the end of the year ; new ratifications of the CTBT ; hope of a resumption in the work of the CD with the increasingly likely opening of the negotiation of a cut-off treaty. Hope that nuclear energy will enable us to face up to the developing countries' considerable demand in electric energy, and will bring an essential contribution to sustainable development and energy security.
5. Our common task is to make sure that the world under construction is one of collective security, stability and prosperity.
6. It is in this context that we must attend to the preservation of the Non Proliferation Treaty's integrity. Having become a quasi universal instrument, it remains the legal cornerstone of our common nuclear security.
7. Preserving the integrity of the NPT means first and foremost to maintain what ensures its consistency : the balance between its three pillars. Limiting the risk of nuclear weapons proliferation, enabling access to peaceful uses of nuclear energy while avoiding diversion of goods and technologies, and encouraging nuclear disarmament in the framework of general and complete disarmament : it is the multiplicity of these objectives and our willingness to move forward simultaneously on all these fronts that gives the Treaty its strength.
8. Preserving the integrity of the NPT is also and mainly about maintaining what ensures its relevance and its credibility : its capacity to respond to realities. Let's use this review cycle to bring concrete and pragmatic responses to the challenges of this new "nuclear era" we are entering.
9. The months to come will be decisive as to our success in achieving this goal. Beyond declarations, what we will have to look into in 2010 are realities, acts and proposals.
10. As for itself, my country is ready to move forward in all areas in an ambitious, resolute and pragmatic way. We want the 2010 review conference to be the opportunity to adopt realistic and

concrete action plans on the three pillars of the NPT. The EU will make proposals to that end that we fully support.

11. Regarding nuclear disarmament, France takes pride in its exemplary record. These are not just words. We have not only ratified the CTBT, signed up to moratorium on the production of fissile materials for nuclear weapons, reduced our total arsenal but also made irreversible decisions in dismantling our nuclear testing installations and our production facilities. In his Cherbourg speech given on March 21 2008, President Nicolas Sarkozy made unprecedented announcements in specifying the total size of our nuclear arsenal and in opening the doors of our former military installations to international experts. He also presented innovative proposals on the pursuit of disarmament to the international community. On this basis, the European Union proposed before the United Nations General Assembly last October a plan of action entailing a certain number of concrete and realistic proposals in the area of disarmament ; this plan of action was endorsed by the twenty-seven heads of States and government of the European Union. We hope that all States parties will join us in supporting and promoting this ambitious programme enabling us to make progress in the area of disarmament. I will come back to it in my statement on the nuclear disarmament cluster.

12. Regarding proliferation, the international community is confronted with several serious crises that have profoundly transformed the conditions of international security and which threaten the regime of nuclear non proliferation. We must provide them with a very firm response. If they are not solved by then, the 2010 Review Conference will therefore have to address them. We will imperatively have to be able to look into the cases of Iran and North Korea which, each in their own way, represent a major challenge to the Treaty. I will come back more in detail on the case of these two countries in my intervention on cluster 1.

13. In order to reinforce the nuclear non-proliferation regime, it is also essential, on the one hand, to ensure the universal implementation of IAEA safeguards agreements and, on the other hand, to universalize the conclusion of additional protocols. It is the combination of these two instruments that can enable the Agency to carry out its mission to the best. We must also promote rigorous export control in particular within the Nuclear Suppliers Group (NSG) in order to prevent proliferant transfers. For these reasons, operational decisions must be made to conclude our debates on the issue of treaty withdrawal.

14. We must in addition work on risk prevention, in particular that of terrorism, linked to the availability and circulation of nuclear goods, notably through clandestine networks, using all the means and instruments that the international community has at its disposal : resolution 1540, PSI, the action of the IAEA, the Global initiative against nuclear terrorism, the Convention against nuclear terrorism, the revised convention on the physical protection of nuclear materials. We must also reinforce our national efforts to prevent and hinder proliferation.

15. I now come to civilian applications of nuclear technology in which France has a unique experience, which enables it to take its full part in the implementation of article IV of the Treaty. France is ready to share it with all countries willing to acquire electro-nuclear capacities and respectful of their international non-proliferation commitments. That's why it has engaged these last years in a growing number of partnerships around the world, in particular with developing countries.

16. In addition to these partnerships, France also actively participates in international efforts to find secure and pragmatic solutions aimed at enabling risk free provision of nuclear fuel.

17. I once again recall that it is important to make progress simultaneously in the implementation of all aspects of the Treaty. The opening of the negotiation of the FMCT and the entry into force of the CTBT are essential elements of the fight against proliferation. The pursuit of nuclear proliferation threatens to slow down disarmament efforts. And only a credible response of the international community to the challenges of proliferation, through reinforcing the non-proliferation regime, will make the assurances necessary to the peaceful uses of nuclear energy and the development of international cooperation that is essential thereto available to all.

Mr Chairman,

18. Allow me to insist on two essential aspects.

19. First, the issue of the Treaty's universality. Pending its achievement, we must as early as now, through dialogue, bring India, Israel and Pakistan as close as possible to international norms in the area of non-proliferation and exports control. Progress has been realized to that end, in particular by India, but many efforts remain to be made.

20. Second, the establishment of a zone free of weapons of mass destruction and their means of delivery in the Middle East, in conformity with the resolution adopted at 1995 Review Conference. France wants all interested States to contribute to the fulfilment of this objective. It recalls that, as declared by the UN Security Council, a solution to the Iranian issue would contribute to global non-proliferation and the realization of the objective of a Middle East free of weapons of mass destruction and their means of delivery. Furthermore, the ratification of the CTBT by all States of the region, and the conclusion of a cut off treaty, would constitute essential and concrete steps in that direction.

Mr Chairman,

21. Our review cycle must not be that of the past, nor of ideological postures. It must be that of future, pragmatism, and concrete acts.

22. This review cycle will be a success if it enables us to make the world safer. It will be a success if it convinces the citizens of our countries that we are putting forward concrete proposals in response to their real concerns. In responding to their fears in front of the worrisome pursuit of proliferation programmes and the violation of international non-proliferation commitments. In integrating their demands for security of nuclear materials enabling the prevention of accidents, terrorism and illicit trafficking. In moving forward on the path of disarmament. In making it possible for them to benefit from the civilian applications of nuclear energy whilst making sure that the development thereof is carried out in the interest of all, that is to say under the best possible conditions of safety, security and nuclear non-proliferation. This is the challenge that we must all live up to, together.

23. Let us use this 3rd Preparatory Committee to prepare under the best conditions the 2010 Review Conference. To that end, it is essential for us to set, without misleading ourselves on what is at stake, the framework that will enable us to live up to these challenges at the time of the great encounter of 2010. We must, in particular, come out of the current exercise with an agenda that responds in a realistic, objective, up to date and balanced way to the recent and fundamental developments of the international situation in the nuclear area ; on the substance, we must also work during the next days to identify concrete and realistic proposals that may form the basis, let us hope, of a plan of action that the Review Conference could adopt to facilitate the implementation of all aspects of the Treaty. France will take its full part in this.

24. I thank you, Mr Chairman.