

Statement
by the Deputy Minister of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of
Kazakhstan
H.E. Mr. Yerzhan Ashikbayev
at the Plenary session of the Conference on Disarmament
(Geneva, February 25, 2019)

Dear Mr. President,
Excellencies, distinguished delegates,

It is a great honour for me to open the High level segment of the Conference on Disarmament on **its 40th anniversary**.

First of all, I would like to **congratulate** H.E. Ambassador Aidan Liddle of the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland on his **assumption of the Presidency of the Conference on Disarmament**.

I am convinced that your experience and skillful leadership will contribute to overcoming the many years of stagnation in the work of the Conference on Disarmament and beginning substantive negotiations. The delegation of Kazakhstan expresses its full support and readiness to assist you in your duties as the President of the Conference.

I also would like to commend the efforts of the **previous CD President**, H.E. Ambassador Yuri Klimenko of Ukraine on finding viable options for the Programme of Work of the Conference.

The key to reaching consensus on critical issues lies in our ability to demonstrate political will, to compromise and to find mutual ground.

I am convinced that the politicization of discussions does not bring any practical value to resolving issues. **Confidence-building** is a key factor and fundamental element of any negotiations process.

The call for dialogue is the main pillar of the **Manifesto “World. 21st century”** presented by the President Nursultan Nazarbayev. The Manifesto envisions a world based upon unity and cooperation, not division and rivalry. In the same spirit of dialogue the President of Kazakhstan, as UN Security Council Chair, convened in January last year a high level debate focused on non-proliferation and confidence - building.

Mr. President,

This year is symbolical for Kazakhstan.

Exactly 30 years ago the **“Nevada–Semey”** International Anti-Nuclear Movement was founded on the initiative of civil society groups of Kazakhstan. On August 29, 1991 the Semipalatinsk nuclear test site was shut down by historic decree of President Nazarbayev. Soon after, the **international moratorium on nuclear testing** in various polygons across the globe followed

and subsequently gave the impulse towards the adoption of the **Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty (CTBT)** in 1996.

It was the first time in world's history that a nuclear test site was closed **by the will of the people and the fourth largest nuclear arsenal was renounced.**

As 30 years passed, it became obvious that the Global anti-nuclear movement needs to be re-vitalized and nuclear disarmament needs a second breath.

During the 73rd session of the UNGA the majority of the UN member-states supported the adoption of the resolution on the "**Universal Declaration of Achieving a Nuclear-Weapons-Free World**". We are grateful to all member-states that supported our initiative and remain determined to continue our work towards universalization of this resolution.

Mr. President,

Another historical milestone is the **25th anniversary of Kazakhstan's accession to the Non-Proliferation Treaty** as a non-nuclear-weapon state. We carried out our obligations with greatest degree of responsibility.

In less than a year the **2020 NPT Review Conference** will take place. We simply do not have the right to let another Review Conference become a failure.

The situation around the **Intermediate-Range Nuclear Forces Treaty (INF)** is a global concern and jeopardizes the whole international security and nuclear disarmament architecture.

It is hard to overestimate the **unique historical role** of the INF Treaty. Its denunciation can provoke a **new arms race** in different parts of the world and is a direct threat to global peace and security.

As one of the parties to the INF Treaty, the Republic of Kazakhstan calls on all states to jointly counter the dangerous tendencies and take measures to save the Treaty.

Mr. President,

The need for an early start of simultaneous negotiations **on all four key agenda items of the CD** is widely accepted and supported.

The Conference must respond adequately to the new challenges, which can and should be discussed within these walls.

For Kazakhstan **nuclear disarmament** is one of the most pressing issues on the contemporary agenda.

Over the past decades, UN member states have not been able to develop any multilateral document on nuclear disarmament. Moreover, bilateral nuclear reduction agreements have been put at risk as well.

Obvious lack of progress on Article VI obligations by nuclear weapon states in recent decades resulted in decision by more than 120 nations to develop

and adopt the **Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons (TPNW)**. This is the reality we cannot ignore. The Treaty fully corresponds to the vision of achieving a nuclear - weapon - free world in 2045 set by the President of Kazakhstan.

Overall the UN Secretary-General Antonio Guterres' "**Agenda for Disarmament**" may offer practical steps and solutions in the nuclear disarmament domain.

Mr. President,

Kazakhstan stands firmly for the earliest **entry into force of the CTBT**. We call upon all remaining **eight Annex II states** to finalize the necessary procedures on signing and ratifying the Treaty.

We must equally maintain the efforts on preventing an arms race in **outer space**. The development of a legally binding instrument prohibiting the deployment of arms in outer space remains a key collective task. A joint initiative on PAROS pursued by Russia and China deserves support of all states.

In the realities of the XXI century reliance on nuclear deterrence can no longer be the bedrock of national security. In this regard, the start of negotiations on a treaty on **negative security assurances** is crucial to sustaining nuclear disarmament, reducing the relevance of the "nuclear umbrella" concept and building confidence.

Kazakhstan advocates for an early start of negotiations on **Fissile Material Cut-off Treaty (FMCT)**. We made a practical contribution to this process by hosting a regional **FMCT workshop in September 2018** that was co-organized by the United Nations Regional Centre for Peace and Disarmament in Asia and the Pacific (UNRCPPD) and financially supported by the European Union.

Mr. President,

This year marks **the 10th anniversary of the establishment of the Nuclear-Weapon-Free Zone** in Central Asia.

We look forward to an early accomplishment of the ratification process of the Protocol on Negative Assurances to the Semipalatinsk Treaty by the United States.

Within the framework of our anti-nuclear initiatives, we will contribute to expanding the geography of the nuclear-weapon-free world. In this regard, Kazakhstan advocates for the establishment of a **zone free of WMD in the Middle East**. The possibility of establishing similar zones in **Northeast Asia, Europe and the Arctic as well as initiatives by individual states** may well be considered in the future.

Currently we are promoting an initiative to create a permanent **mechanism of cooperation and coordination** between all existing nuclear-

weapon-free zones and we plan to hold a meeting of representatives of all zones in Astana. We welcome all interested parties to take an active part in this process.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

Since its independence Kazakhstan demonstrated its aspiration for disarmament and a firm commitment to the principle of non-proliferation of nuclear weapons.

The realities of today are such that **many conflicts can be prevented and effectively resolved** only if there is **mutual understanding and mutual trust** between the nuclear powers.

Finding compromise-based solutions has never been easy. It requires political will for action, understanding and willingness to work together.

Thank you for your attention.