

Opening Remarks by Deputy Foreign Minister of Argentina, Ambassador Daniel Raimondi
V Plenary Meeting of the International Partnership for Nuclear Disarmament Verification
Buenos Aires, Argentina

Distinguished colleagues and members of non-governmental organizations

I would like to begin by extending a warm welcome to all the present delegations that have travelled to Argentina and are present here today. It is a great honor for my country to host this very important meeting during the next three days. I am confident that we will make substantial progress in our work.

I also want to take the opportunity to thank the Government of the United States and the Nuclear Threat Initiative for guiding and promoting this important contribution to the global disarmament agenda, and extend our appreciation to the co-chairs for the hard work that they have put into tackling the main challenges involved in nuclear disarmament verification over the past two years, and setting the new goals for the future of the Partnership.

We are facing an international context marked by uncertainty. We cannot ignore the successive nuclear and missile tests that have been conducted by the DPRK, which constitute a threat to international security as whole, and my country condemns in the strongest terms possible.

In this regard, nuclear and non-nuclear weapon states alike have to renew and double their efforts in nuclear disarmament, in order to work together towards a common aspiration that we all share: a world free of nuclear weapons.

This constitutes, without a doubt, a goal that we can all agree on, and has to guide our work in this crucial subject.

We acknowledge, however, that differences exist within the international community regarding which is the best path to take in order to reach this desired goal.

For Argentina, there are no shortcuts when it comes to nuclear disarmament. We believe that real progress in nuclear disarmament can only be achieved through effective verification, in a transparent and irreversible way.

In this regard, this Partnership offers, for the first time, a standing multilateral framework to implement these principles in a joint effort among nuclear and non-nuclear weapon states.

By addressing the technical aspects involved in nuclear disarmament verification, this Initiative constitutes an important step in the fulfillment of the primary obligations of nuclear weapon states that exist under Article 6 of the Treaty for the Non Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT).

As a country looking forward to chairing the next Review Conference of the NPT in 2020, we are ready to work closely in order to strengthen the cornerstone of the international regime.

We also believe that we need to foster dialogue and confidence building measures between nuclear and non-nuclear weapon countries. In this context, this Initiative constitutes a clear example in different fora of how we could work together in reaching common understandings.

I am confident that the Buenos Aires Plenary will set a milestone for the Partnership.

We look forward to discussing the main findings of the Working Groups through the dense set of documents produced which will bring an end to Phase I, and prepare the way ahead towards Phase II.

The preliminary conclusion that we have reached so far, which lead us to affirm that there are no technical obstacles or proliferation concerns involved in verification of

nuclear disarmament, is a strong message that fills us with optimism and renews our confidence in the Partnership's future.

We should also work in exploring ways on how to strengthen cooperation among members of the Initiative on the issue of technical capacity building, which is a very important aspect in verification of nuclear disarmament.

Likewise, we are also eager to exchange thoughts concerning the potential interaction between the Partnership and the Governmental Group of Experts on Nuclear Disarmament Verification that will meet in Geneva in 2018 and 2019, giving the Initiative a specific opportunity to share this work with the rest of the international community.

We look forward to a fruitful meeting, and you can count with my country's commitment to the Partnership as we move forward to identify further technical challenges that lie ahead in nuclear disarmament verification.

Thank you very much.