

**First Meeting of States Parties to the
Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons (TPNW)**

Vienna, 21-23 June 2022

Statement by Ambassador Rüdiger Bohn

Head of the German Observer Delegation to the MSP

Thank you Mr. President,

- **Without any doubt, the 1st Meeting of States Parties to the TPNW is seen as a major event in nuclear disarmament diplomacy. We are here to offer our perspective as a non-member to this Treaty.**

Excellencies, colleagues,

Ladies and gentlemen,

- **As we meet Russia's brutal war on Ukraine is ongoing. This war of aggression has a profoundly disturbing nuclear dimension. More than once, Russia has made use of reckless nuclear rhetoric, threatening to escalate its war of aggression by using nuclear weapons.**
- **Nuclear intimidation to shield conventional aggression against a peaceful country that has foregone its nuclear arsenal – such behavior has no precedent in history. It is all the more unsettling as Russia in the Budapest Memorandum had given extensive security assurances in return for Ukraine to give up its nuclear arsenal.**
- **Consequently, the great majority of States has clearly condemned Russia's aggression, its nuclear coercive signaling and announcement to increase the readiness of its nuclear forces. That was the right thing to do for the UN General Assembly in March. And it remains a matter of credibility especially for advocates of nuclear disarmament.**

- I am therefore encouraged by the clear stance taken by many delegations today. And we encourage this Meeting of States Parties to be equally clear.

Ladies and gentlemen,

- While this Meeting is supposed to put on track the TPNW, it is also your springboard to the 10th Review Conference of the Non-Proliferation Treaty – the irreplaceable framework for nuclear disarmament and non-proliferation.
- Several countries, including mine, have expressed their concerns about frictions arising between the TPNW and the NPT. Against this background, we highly appreciate the unequivocal declaration in support of the NPT, envisaged by this Meeting of States Parties.
- We encourage all States to strengthen the NPT in all its dimensions, including by promoting better implementation of Article VI and ensuring the universal application of the highest IAEA safeguards standard – with the CSA plus the Additional Protocol. We are convinced that nuclear disarmament and non-proliferation are two sides of the same coin.
- In the past years the NPT has increasingly come under strain. Today, we are at a juncture, facing the risk of a threefold trend reversal – in nuclear stockpile reduction, in reducing the role of nuclear weapons and in successfully countering nuclear proliferation.
- Such scenarios require more united efforts in good-faith. More than ever, we must work to ensure that the decline in global arsenals continues, contain proliferation dynamics rising at the horizon and strengthen the norm against the use of nuclear weapons, contrasting Russia's irresponsible rhetoric and behavior.
- Germany is resolved to lend its support to these goals. And we believe that supporters and sceptics of the TPNW can work shoulder to shoulder in that regard – as the Stockholm Initiative on Nuclear Disarmament and the Non-Proliferation and Disarmament Initiative illustrate.

Ladies and gentlemen,

- We fully share the goal of achieving a world free of nuclear weapons and we recognize the motives and the engagement of TPNW States Parties in this regard. We especially value the humanitarian perspective put forward.
- As a member to NATO – and as long as nuclear weapons exist, NATO will remain a nuclear Alliance -, and confronted with an openly aggressive Russia, which has not only invaded Ukraine but is threatening the rules-based international order and peace in Europe, Germany cannot accede to the TPNW, which would collide with our membership in NATO including nuclear deterrence. As non-member to the TPNW we are not bound by its provisions, nor do we accept the claim that its provisions are applicable under customary law – now or in the future.
- Germany is committed to engaging in constructive dialogue and exploring opportunities for practical cooperation. We are interested to hear more about the “positive obligations” of the Treaty. Indeed, we believe that the provision of victims assistance and environmental remediation from the long-term damages of nuclear testing deserve broader attention and engagement.

Colleagues,

- Since the very first resolution by the UN General Assembly the international community is obliged to the goal of a world free from nuclear weapons. It took many decades until the world started to make progress on that path. Since 1990 eventually, significant reductions could be achieved.
- This process has come to a halt, disrupted now by Russia’s war of aggression. Clearly, genuine progress can be achieved only when *all* nuclear weapon states take credible steps. Today, Russia is doing precisely the opposite, is threatening to use nuclear weapons. And China is expanding its nuclear arsenal in size and sophistication.
- In such times, open-minded dialogue and an honest debate are all the more essential: To translate common intentions into new progress. That is why we are here.
- I thank you, Mr. President.