Statement by H.E. Natasha Meli Daudey, Permanent Representative, Permanent Representation of Malta to the UN and other Organisations in Vienna

First Meeting of the State Parties of the TPNW

21st June 2022

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President,
Excellencies,
Distinguished delegates,

Malta is honoured to participate in this historic First Meeting of State Parties to the Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons.

Today we convene to mark an important milestone. The entry into force of the Treaty fills a long overdue and dangerous void that had been left in the international legal regime in the field of nuclear weapons. We hope that this Treaty will be the catalyst of change in paradigm and trajectory.

Today we also meet to reiterate our strong resolve against these weapons, but also to move a step forward and commit to concrete actions to implement our obligations under the TPNW. The current bleak geopolitical situation has created an even greater sense of urgency.

Indeed, we gather here at a time when the conditions for regional and international security are deteriorating at a worrying pace, and where our endeavours to have a world free from nuclear weapons are increasingly challenged. The setbacks encountered in the efforts towards the renewal of the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action (JCPOA), the constant violations of UNSC Resolutions in the Korean
Peninsula, and the risk posed by the nuclear arsenals are only a few of the challenges we currently face.

The use of nuclear weapons is not anymore an abstract phenomenon, or a remote nightmare. The most recent explicit threats by Russia have indeed transformed the unthinkable into a terrifying potential eventuality.

So, while we are pleased to be here to mark this historic milestone, we are aware that there is no room for jubilation The current international situation is not only a reminder that we have to remain steadfast in our efforts but a wake-up call for urgency to act,

Excellencies,

Nuclear deterrence is not tantamount to security. This is simply an illusion.

Only disarmament and a total prohibition of nuclear weapons can provide a security guarantee that these will never be used.

Malta’s unwavering commitment to the TPNW is driven primarily by this strong belief.

No state, big or small, possessing nuclear capabilities or not, is immune of the array of trans-border humanitarian consequences if these weapons were to be detonated.

No state would be immune to the climate disruption, the agricultural and economic collapse, the mass human displacement, and famine that would inevitably follow if a nuclear war were to be unleashed.

As the mechanisms of this Treaty are being developed, Malta would like to engage with fellow State Parties and other relevant stakeholders, in the implementation of the Treaty, including the commitment to implement Articles 6 and 7 on international cooperation and assistance, as well as on environmental remediation, which are linked to the humanitarian objectives of the same TPNW.
Malta also believes that further knowledge on the humanitarian impact of nuclear weapons will be needed in the years to come for State Parties to continue to take decisions based on the most updated scientific knowledge. The series of conferences on the humanitarian impact of nuclear weapons, ending with the one hosted yesterday by Austria, provided us with good opportunities, and evidence of impacts and the costs involved.

In this regard, while we praise the work carried out on the President’s Paper on Institutionalizing Scientific and Technical Advice, I am happy to signal support, on behalf of my country, for the establishment of a Scientific Advisory Group based on the mandate contained in the President’s Paper.

Furthermore, Article 4 of the TPNW, which establishes the obligations towards the total ban of nuclear weapons, Malta sees merit that in the intersessional period following this First Meeting, State Parties should translate the general obligations contained in the Treaty into a specific mandate and guidance for the designation of a Competent International Authority (CIA).

Excellencies,

The universalisation of the Treaty is key if we want to reach our objectives. We shall spare no efforts aiming at convincing more countries to join the TPNW.

We must continue to raise awareness of the Treaty’s positive contribution to disarmament, international peace, and security.

Far from undermining the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT), Malta believes that the TPNW complements and supports the NPT’s nuclear disarmament and non-proliferation objectives as it represents a concrete step towards implementing the NPT’s Article VI obligation to pursue negotiations on effective measures for nuclear disarmament. Ahead of the NPT RevCon scheduled for August, we call on all NPT State Parties to redouble their efforts in this regard.
Excellencies,

Mr Chair,

It is our responsibility to ensure that a nuclear-weapon-free world becomes a reality for the generations to come.

We owe it to them and to all the victims and survivors.

Thank you.