STATEMENT BY
HIS EXCELLENCY COLIN CONNELLY,
HEAD OF DELEGATION
AT THE
FIRST MEETING OF STATES PARTIES (1MSP) TO THE TREATY ON THE
PROHIBITION OF NUCLEAR WEAPONS (TPNW)
21-23 JUNE 2022
Mr President,

At the outset, I wish to extend congratulations to you and to the other members of the Bureau on your election and assure you of Trinidad and Tobago’s full support and cooperation. This inaugural meeting of States Parties to the Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons (TPNW) represents a giant step for the preservation of humankind.

As a member of a region that established the first Nuclear Weapons Free Zone pursuant to the Treaty of Tlateloco, Trinidad and Tobago joined the international community in celebrating the entry into force of the TPNW in January 2021. We remain convinced that it is only through the total elimination of nuclear weapons and other weapons of mass destruction that international peace and security can be guaranteed and secured. To the contrary, the continued existence, accumulation and modernization of such weapons actually increases the threat level towards our collective security. The TPNW therefore is a decisive positive step towards achieving a world, safe and secure, from mutual assured destruction.

As a Small Island Developing State, we rely on the strict observance by all States of the Purposes and Principles of the Charter of the United Nations, the rule of law and on international agreements as guarantors of our right to a secure and peaceful existence. Trinidad and Tobago’s support for the Treaty for the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons is in alignment with our National Development Strategy and the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development.

Mr. President,

It is indeed lamentable that the international community still grapples with the noble though necessary goal of totally eliminating nuclear weapons. Worryingly, contemporary action is diametrically opposed to and in fact, undermines the very concept and goal of disarmament, notwithstanding that we are well aware that the use or threat of use of nuclear weapons constitutes a clear violation of the Charter and of international law, including international humanitarian law.
Trinidad and Tobago was encouraged by the Joint Statement of the Leaders of the Five Nuclear-Weapon States on Preventing Nuclear War and Avoiding Arms Races earlier this year that, a nuclear war “cannot be won and must never be fought.” We continue to hope that those reassuring platitudes of responsible conduct on the part of nuclear weapons States will be matched, sooner rather than later, by genuine commitments that demonstrate bold and decisive leadership in the right direction.

The evidence indicates that any resort to nuclear weapons will cause untold loss of life well beyond the theatre of the conflict, while simultaneously inflicting calamitous destruction on our environment, the food supply and to our planet’s natural ecosystems. Given these direct and far-reaching consequences for humankind and for our irreplaceable habitat, Trinidad and Tobago is strong in its perspective that the use of nuclear weapons is not now, nor can it ever be, an option; unless, by some irrationality, the goal is the total annihilation of the human race, wrecking of the planet and long term misery and destitution. Given such doomsday scenario, we robustly advocate the universality of the TPNW.

Mr. President,

We look forward to actively participating in this meeting to discuss, among other issues, the universalization of the TPNW. For us this juncture represents a starting point to mobilize action to stigmatize the existence of nuclear weapons. We hope that the impetus of this meeting will incentivize other member States to become States Parties. Therefore, we encourage those States that have not yet done so to sign and ratify the Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons, as it provides a window for immediate action towards full nuclear disarmament.

Mr President,

I thank you.