

## **Speech delivered by Ambassador Gustavo Zlauvinen, President-designate of the Tenth NPT RevCon, to the Tenth EU Non-Proliferation and Disarmament Conference**

“At the outset I would like to thank the European Union for inviting me to speak today, but my gratitude extends well beyond this conference. From the very beginning of my lengthy tenure as President-designate of the Tenth Review Conference of the Parties to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons, the EU has been one my staunchest supporters.

Throughout this extended hiatus, the EU has remained steadfastly committed to ensuring that the Review Conference, no matter when it is held, achieves a successful conclusion that strengthens the implementation of the Treaty.

And, in addition to the political support provided by the EU, including from my good friend Special Representative Van Deelen, the EU has – as they say – “put its money where its mouth is” through the provision of generous financial sponsorship of a project to help lay the ground for a successful Review Conference across every region of the globe.

As we enter into the final approach for the RevCon, I have no doubt that I will need to lean on the support of the EU and its Member States again.

After almost two years of delay, we are finally poised to hold the Conference. The delay has been challenging, but I am exceedingly grateful to all States Parties for their consistent engagement on matters of administration but also substance.

It is also unfortunate that the modalities under which we will hold the Review Conference will be somewhat restricted compared to RevCons of the past. Sadly, this is unavoidable due to the ongoing dangers of the COVID pandemic. States Parties are to be commended for not only their flexibility but also their commitment. After all, the willingness to hold the Review Conference under imperfect conditions reflects States Parties’ commitment to the NPT and the important role it plays in international peace and security.

I am confident that all stakeholders will work together to make the best of the situation and will strive for an ambitious outcome despite the trying circumstances.

Since the initial postponement some twenty-one months ago, significant developments have occurred in the field of nuclear disarmament and non-proliferation, some positive and some more worrying.

Tentative steps towards dialogue are beginning to offset heated rhetoric. These are sparks that need to be fanned. If we are to achieve success at the Review Conference it is essential that States Parties are able to maximize positive developments and strengthen commonalities, while working to bridge divides and ameliorate negative trends.

I do not need to remind this audience that we live in especially fluid times. The nuclear landscape is in a state of flux not seen in decades. Once again, the NPT will be called upon to bring some semblance of stability to the situation. In the face of growing nuclear dangers, it will be tasked with reducing the risk of nuclear war, reinforcing the non-proliferation regime and seeking progress on the Treaty's long-term goal of the elimination of all nuclear weapons. At a time of global crisis, States Parties also have an opportunity to contribute to other global priorities – including sustainable development and public health – through the benefits of the peaceful uses of nuclear science and technology.

During the extensive consultations I have undertaken as President-designate, five key themes have emerged regarding what States Parties want to see emerge from the Review Conference.

First, I have heard numerous States Parties raise the issue of previous commitments made under all three pillars of the Treaty and improving accountability for their implementation.

Second, a consistent theme has been the need for the NPT to raise awareness about the value so many States place on the peaceful uses of nuclear science and technology, including its role in addressing global challenges. States Parties have also expressed a strong interest in establishing how the Treaty can facilitate broader access to the benefits of these technologies.

Third, a large majority of States Parties have expressed hope that the Review Conference will make progress in the implementation of Article VI. They have stressed the pressing need to take steps to reduce nuclear risks but to ensure such steps advance the complete, verifiable and irreversible elimination of nuclear weapons. Reconciling divergent positions on how to achieve this will be crucial to achieving a successful outcome.

Fourth, the need to address regional proliferation crises has been an often-raised concern. This requires answering such questions as, what role can the Treaty play in mitigating these challenges, particularly in Asia and the Middle East? Similarly, States Parties have asked how the Review Conference can assist in bolstering the safeguards system against emerging challenges such as those posed by new technologies.

Fifth and finally, throughout my consultations I have heard calls for a more inclusive approach to the Review Conference. States Parties have highlighted the need for the Conference to ensure all stakeholders are heard, from youth the industry to civil society, and to do so in a manner that reflects equal participation by all genders.

There are clear and obvious divergences of position on these issues, but I believe they also represent what I call “green shoots of convergence”. If these are watered properly, they can grow into foundations for a successful Review Conference.

This is where I must once again call on the support of the EU and its Member States. Yours is a diverse coalition of States Parties and, as you have proved time and again, you can be a force for compromise, commonality and cooperation. We will need that at the Review Conference.

I look forward to working with all of you in a spirit of collaboration, flexibility and with a willingness to truly listen and to negotiate in good faith.

Thank you in advance for your support.”