



## **BELGIUM**

### **Statement in the General Debate**

#### **11<sup>th</sup> Review Conference of the Parties to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT) New York, 27 April – 22 May 2026**

Mr. President,

Let me begin by congratulating you on assuming the presidency of this Review Conference of the Non-Proliferation Treaty. You can count on the full cooperation of my delegation as you carry out your important responsibilities.

Belgium fully aligns itself with the statement made by the European Union.

Mr. President,

Our current geopolitical landscape is marked by growing uncertainty and shifting paradigms. The NPT does not operate in a vacuum and undergoes the tides of change. The bedrock upon which it is built is eroding. Treaties that allowed for the management of strategic risk have been violated. Nuclear threats have multiplied. The basic tenets of the non-proliferation regime, such as safeguards agreements, have been disregarded. The review cycle itself has been stymied by the impossibility to agree on a common platform and a shared course of action.

Differences in perspective have always existed within the NPT community. But today, dialogue is increasingly challenged by widening divisions over both focus and principles. Some States call into question the legitimacy of nuclear weapons and the validity of nuclear deterrence. Meanwhile, certain nuclear-weapon States pay lip service to the goal of

disarmament, while simultaneously producing new warheads at unprecedented speed or developing novel, disruptive systems.

It is time to return to the fundamentals of the NPT. The treaty was born from realistic pragmatism. It acknowledged the existence of nuclear weapons, while setting a clear aspiration for their eventual elimination. It recognized that these weapons must not spread beyond the nuclear-weapon States recognized by the Treaty. It charted a path to spread the benefits of nuclear technology while providing the necessary safeguards against abuse for military means. This conference should recommit to the basics of the Treaty. We need to embrace the goal of a world without nuclear weapons, promote all realistic pathways leading thereto and reject foul play.

In concrete terms, this means advancing arms control agreements between the nuclear-weapon States, bringing nuclear testing to a definitive end, halting the production of fissile material for nuclear explosive purposes, and developing credible verification measures for future disarmament. It also means working to bring all other States possessing nuclear weapons under effective arms control constraints. Pending progress, measures should be taken to reduce nuclear risk and strengthen confidence-building. Those who do not play by the rules should be exposed.

For this to happen we need to look beyond tired speaking points and entrenched positions and leave behind zero sum game thinking. A world without nuclear weapons requires a world without nuclear tests. One cannot lament the lack of progress towards nuclear disarmament while refusing to join the CTBT. There remains one nuclear-weapon State that has yet to declare a formal moratorium on the production of fissile material—and the same State continues to produce warheads at an exponential rate. There is just one nuclear-weapon State seeking to annex parts of another State and using nuclear threats to deter resistance. The same State shields the DPRK and Iran, the two most pressing proliferation challenges of our time. These dynamics can—and must—change.

We should also take a critical look at our own working methods and see where we can be more effective and efficient. Special attention should be given to the improvement of transparency and accountability, which will make this review process more impactful and more resilient.

I would also like to address the issue of extended nuclear deterrence and nuclear-sharing arrangements, which have been criticized previously. These arrangements predate the NPT and are fully consistent with its provisions. We reject attempts to manufacture an artificial controversy as a way to divert attention from the real threats facing the NPT.

Mr. President,

The NPT remains the only instrument that enshrines the delicate but essential balance between nuclear disarmament, non-proliferation and the peaceful uses of nuclear energy. Let us work together to strengthen that balance and carry the Treaty's promise forward.