The United States welcomes the establishment of the Working Group on further strengthening the review process of the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT) as an opportunity to consider practical ways to improve the existing review process and to identify and reinforce best practices from recent experience. This Working Group can help structure the Review Process in ways that foster constructive engagement to reduce substantive differences.

The purpose of the NPT review process, as set out in Article VIII.3 of the Treaty is “to review the operation of this Treaty with a view to assuring that the purposes of the Preamble and the provisions of the Treaty are being realized.” In its decision on strengthening the review process, the 1995 NPT Review and Extension Conference decided that “Review Conferences should look forward as well as back. They should evaluate the results of the period they are reviewing, including the implementation of undertakings of the States parties under the Treaty, and identify the areas in which, and the means through which, further progress should be sought in the future. Review Conferences should also address specifically what might be done to strengthen the implementation of the Treaty and to achieve its universality.”

**Issue 1: Duplication**

The mandate for this Working Group is “to discuss and make recommendations to the Preparatory Committee on measures that would improve the effectiveness, efficiency, transparency, accountability, coordination and continuity of the review process of the Treaty.” The duplication in coverage of substantive issues across the three cluster groups of the Preparatory Committee meetings and the three Main Committees of the Review Conference, and more so between the Main Committees and
their Subsidiary Bodies, impede the effectiveness and efficiency of the review process. This leads to repetition of well-known talking points and takes time away from interactive deliberations among States Parties. While there are linkages among the three pillars these clusters and Main Committees represent, and those pillars are in many ways mutually reinforcing, the current structure has not proven effective at elucidating those connections or at addressing other cross-cutting issues.

Several options could be considered for reducing duplication and improving effectiveness and efficiency in the review process:

- Revising the mandates of the Main Committees and clusters to eliminate duplication. For example, Articles I, II, and III, the central nonproliferation provisions of the Treaty, could be remanded to Main Committee II, while Main Committee I could focus on Article VI and Main Committee III on Article IV. Regional issues could be remanded either to Main Committee I or II (but not both), and other provisions of the treaty to Main Committee III.

- Alternatively, replacing the pillar-by-pillar review in the three Main Committees with an article-by-article review in plenary sessions.

- Defining a clear division between the Main Committees and the Subsidiary Bodies. One option could be that each of the Main Committees focus on the review of past actions while their Subsidiary Bodies focus on recommendations for future actions. Another option would be to divide issues along substantive lines, in which case it could be useful to preserve the flexibility to adjust those divisions from time to time.

- Preserving and potentially expanding opportunities to address cross-cutting issues such as transparency, reporting, education and capacity building, gender and diversity. These could be addressed in dedicated plenary sessions of Review Conferences and the Preparatory Committee.
### Issue 2: Reporting

States Parties have long reported to the Review Conference on their actions in support of the NPT. The consensus Action Plan from the 2010 Review Conference says “States parties should submit regular reports, within the framework of the strengthened review process for the Treaty, on the implementation of the present action plan, as well as of article VI,” along with disarmament actions recommended by the 1995 and 2000 Review Conferences (Action 20). It also encouraged the Nuclear Weapon States to agree on a standard reporting form and to determine appropriate reporting intervals (Action 21).

The United States has reported consistently on its own implementation of the NPT and actions to strengthen the NPT regime across all three pillars, including to the 2014 Preparatory Conference, the 2015 Review Conference, and most recently to the 2022 Review Conference (NPT/CONF.2020/57), using a reporting format adopted by the nuclear-weapon States. The practice of submitting national reports has grown steadily and is now well established. In 2015, 22 States Parties submitted national reports, and in 2022, 40 States Parties did so. These reports have usually been presented in side-events, as there has not been place for such presentations in formal meetings of the Preparatory Committee or the Review Conference. The United States would support dedicating time in those formal meetings for presentation and interactive discussion of national reports. Such discussions would provide an enhanced mechanism for transparency and accountability.

There are a number of decisions that would be needed about modalities:

- Since these national reports often cut across all three pillars, it would be an appropriate balance to present and discuss them in plenary sessions.

- The opportunity to present national reports should be open to all States Parties that wish to do so. The deadline for submission of
reports should be early enough that other States Parties have sufficient time to review them before the discussion session.

- The organization of each session, including the number and mix of national reports, the structure and moderation of the discussion and answering questions from other States Parties, should be considered carefully. Given the time constraints, providing questions in advance in writing could help to structure the discussion.

**Issue 3: Role of the Preparatory Committee**

Until the 1995 Review and Extension Conference, Preparatory Committee meetings focused on administrative matters and making the necessary decisions and arrangements for the Review Conference. The 1995 Decision on strengthening the review process gave the Preparatory Committee more time (three meetings vs. one) and a much broader mandate “to consider principles, objectives and ways in order to promote the full implementation of the Treaty, as well as its universality, and to make recommendations thereon to the Review Conference.” Since then, the Chairs of the Preparatory Committee, particularly at its third session, have sought to build consensus on substantive recommendations to the Review Conference. However, this ambition has never been achieved. Reaching consensus at Review Conferences has proven to be difficult enough, often hinging on key compromises sought during the final week of the Conference. And since many States Parties adopt the approach that “nothing is agreed until everything is agreed,” making substantive recommendations would essentially require pre-negotiating such compromises a full year in advance. Even when there is a strong convergence of interest on certain topics, such as risk reduction or linking peaceful uses to sustainable development goals, the Preparatory Committee has never been able to reach consensus on substantive recommendations on those or any other topics.

An alternative would be for the Preparatory Committee to focus on compiling, exchanging views, and subsequently assigning proposals for structured discussion to one of the Main Committees or Subsidiary Bodies.
Rather than seeking to prejudge the outcome of the Review Conference by resolving differences, the Preparatory Committee would allow for a more in-depth exchange of views to increase understanding. This could make better use of the Preparatory Committees and lead to more focused and topically relevant Review Conferences, while avoiding the displeasure that has sometimes resulted from efforts to force a compromise at the end of the last Preparatory Committee meeting.

**Issue 4: Reinforcing Good Practices**

The 2015 Review Cycle resulted in several constructive innovations that helped make the process more inclusive, effective, and efficient, and also improved coordination and continuity within the leadership team. The Working Group should consider recommending that the Preparatory Committee endorse these good practices to reinforce and regularize their use. Among those new practices, the United States would be ready to endorse:

- **Holding regional and topical workshops** during the year ahead of each meeting. Some of these were organized by the PrepCom Chair and RevCon President-Elect, some by interested States Parties. All of them were funded through voluntary funding from interested States Parties. A mechanism for funding travel to such events by representatives of smaller, less developed countries could also be considered. Regional consultations could make use of UN facilities in Nairobi, Addis Ababa, Santiago, Beirut, and Bangkok.

- **Early naming of the leadership** of each Preparatory Committee and the President-Elect of the Review Conference a year ahead of time maximized the ability of each to carry out such consultations and otherwise prepare to lead those meetings.

- **Formalizing the NPT Bureau** by encouraging the three Preparatory Committee Chairs and the President-Elect of the Review Conference to work together as a team. The UN Office of Disarmament Affairs could
provide administrative and logistical support (subject to the usual assessed funding by States Parties).

- **Formalizing the UN Role** by establishing the UN Office of Disarmament Affairs as the permanent Secretariat for the NPT review process rather than deciding separately for each NPT review cycle. Such a decision could also formalize the supporting role of the IAEA in staffing the Secretariat for issues of nonproliferation and peaceful uses of nuclear technology.

The United States looks forward to discussion of each of these issues, as well as proposals put forward by other States Parties, during the Working Group meeting.