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PERMANENT MISSION OF AUSTRIA  
TO THE UNITED NATIONS

## **Third Meeting of States Parties to the Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons (TPNW)**

### **Article 4 - Towards the Elimination of Nuclear Weapons**

#### **Statement by the Republic of Austria**

**delivered by**

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Mr. President,

At the outset we would like to thank the co-chairs Malaysia and New Zealand for their efforts over the past year. We welcome the collaboration between the Working group and members of the Scientific Advisory Group, experts, scientists and civil society in discussing different technical aspects of disarmament verification. The result as presented in the working paper is a good basis to help us develop a common understanding of key concepts for nuclear disarmament verification.

With a view towards our first Review Conference, our discussions on the designation of a competent international authority or authorities for verification should build on the specific expertise and knowledge of International Organizations already working on matters relevant to our endeavour. In this context, we very much support the recommendations on further work as outlined in the report by the facilitators.

First, the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) has a mandate for and key technical expertise that is highly relevant for the implementation of Art. 4 and we firmly endorse to deepen the engagement with the Agency on this. One very pertinent example is the experience the IAEA gained when it undertook the verification of dismantling the nuclear weapons program in South Africa. This corresponds to the “eliminate and join” approach as contained in Art. 4. This highly relevant expertise should be brought into our discussions in the coming year.

Second, the CTBTO with its globally spanning International Monitoring System established itself as a reliable source in ensuring that, pending the entry into force of the CTBT, the moratorium on nuclear testing remains upheld. We therefore have consistently championed the idea that the CTBTO should be designated as the competent international authority to verify the provisions under Article 1 of the TPNW with regard to testing. This would underline the complementarity of the Treaties and ensure synergies are maximized. From our point of view, this could be a key deliverable to be achieved at the Review Conference.

Mr. President,

The challenge with Weapons of Mass destruction is not simply the destruction of weapons themselves but the dismantlement of whole weapons programmes. Our endeavor is therefore an ambitious one but it is not unrealistic. The TPNW is not the first disarmament regime to address verification as part of its implementation. Non-nuclear-weapons States have their non-proliferation obligations fully verified under the IAEA's safeguards obligations. Disarmament verification can build on such measures already undertaken in arms control, disarmament and non-proliferation to define and ensure the implementation of a standard of irreversibility.

Moreover, there are other relevant discussions and processes that address the challenges of disarmament verification, such as examining the concept of "irreversibility" and the "international partnership for disarmament verification" (IPNDV). Austria is of the view that all processes can profit from cooperation and we would encourage efforts in this regard. Austria will remain engaged in our continued discussions on this matter towards coming to a common understanding during the Review Conference.

Thank you