

Statement by the

**Minister of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Slovenia**

**H. E. Tanja Fajon**

at the

**Tenth Review Conference of the Parties to the Treaty on the Non-proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT)**

New York, 1 August 2022

Mr. President,

I would like to congratulate you on your election. We count on your wisdom and political acumen and I assure you of our full support. We were pleased to host you in Slovenia in September last year, when we discussed many important issues relevant to global nuclear disarmament and non-proliferation regime.

Mr. President,

In Europe, we are facing the most deteriorated security environment in decades. Its severe implications resonate across the world. Slovenia condemns the unprovoked Russia's aggression against Ukraine, which is a flagrant violation of international law and global norms. We urge Russia to immediately cease its hostilities and withdraw from independent Ukraine's sovereign territory. We also denounce the involvement of Belarus in this unjustifiable invasion.

Slovenia will continue to provide humanitarian support to the Ukrainian people as well as support their inherent right to self-defence. We welcome the agreement to resume the Grain Exports through Ukrainian Ports and the departure of the first ship from Odessa Port this morning. This is an important sign that dialogue is possible in search to ease human suffering, and to mitigate the risk of a Global Food Crisis.

Mr. President,

Blatant violation of the Budapest Memorandum, unacceptable nuclear rhetoric and reckless acts against Ukraine's nuclear facilities, which go against the letter and spirit of the NPT, must stop. These actions further aggravate an already eroded global nuclear non-proliferation, disarmament and arms control regime. The resulting security challenges call for a stronger, not weaker application of international law, norms and institutions.

Slovenia believes that it is high time to reaffirm collectively the NPT as the cornerstone of disarmament, non-proliferation and peaceful uses of nuclear energy. We also need to make every effort to strengthen the authority of the Treaty across all three mutually reinforcing pillars. Slovenia calls on all states, which still have not done so, to join the Treaty as non-nuclear weapon States.

Mr. President,

Slovenia remains committed to a world free of nuclear weapons in accordance with Article VI of the NPT. We are convinced that achieving this goal is possible only through a progressive approach.

We consider the efforts to advance strategic risk reduction arrangements as a concrete step towards this ultimate objective, and not as a tool to replace it. Slovenia also fully supports practical approaches in this area, like the Stockholm initiative for nuclear disarmament.

Furthermore, we welcomed the extension of the New START Treaty in 2021 and supported the relaunch of the Strategic Stability Dialogue, which has now regrettably stalled, due to Russia's brutal war in Ukraine. In our view, such new arrangement should address new strategic systems and include the participation of China.

Let me also emphasize, that as a country with a fully-fledged civilian nuclear programme, we stand ready to create new opportunities for other countries to benefit from peaceful uses of nuclear energy, science and technology. This is all the more important in light of global efforts to achieve the Sustainable Development Goals. Slovenia will remain a steadfast supporter of the IAEA peaceful use programs also financially. Out of further desire to contribute to the maintenance of international peace and security, Slovenia has decided to present its candidacy for a non-permanent seat on the UN Security Council for the period 2024-2025.

Mr. President,

There should be no doubt about the urgent need for the universalization of the Comprehensive Safeguards Agreement and Additional Protocol. Both constitute the current verification standard. We therefore call on the Democratic People's Republic of Korea to take concrete steps towards complete, verifiable and irreversible denuclearization. Let me also underline Slovenia's firm support to the ongoing intensive diplomatic efforts aimed to preserve and restore full and effective implementation of the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action (JCPoA).

Mr. President, in conclusion,

The task before us appears almost insurmountable. However, we must not give up, but rather demonstrate our resolve to advance the NPT.

It is also for this reason that all of us, States Parties to the NPT, should work constructively to achieve a meaningful outcome of this Review Conference.

Thank you for your attention.