

## **Statement by Dr. Hans Blix, the Chairman of the Weapons of Mass Destruction Commission (WMDC)\***

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*After a meeting of the Weapons of Mass Destruction Commission (WMDC) in New Delhi on 14-16 March 2005, its Chairman made the following statement about the forthcoming Review Conference of the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT).*

The NPT is the most vital instrument in the global effort to control and eliminate the most dangerous of all weapons of mass destruction. The non-nuclear-weapon states parties to the treaty have committed themselves not to acquire nuclear weapons and the five nuclear-weapon states together with the other parties have committed themselves to negotiate toward nuclear disarmament.

Regrettably, the aims of the Treaty to control and eliminate nuclear weapons globally have been set back

- by the development of nuclear weapons by some states in violation of their treaty commitments;
- by the failure of the nuclear-weapon states parties decisively to reduce the role and number of their nuclear weapons, despite their disarmament commitment under the Treaty;
- by the risk of terrorists acquiring nuclear weapons; and
- by the possession of nuclear weapons by states not parties to the treaty.

The coming Review Conference of the NPT thus takes place at a crucial time and will test the resolve of states to find equitable and reliable solutions to these challenges. This will require a firm will by all parties to attain the aims of the treaty through cooperation, in particular:

- Nuclear disarmament and nuclear non-proliferation are equally needed and mutually reinforcing. Both must be pursued vigorously and continuously. States which possess nuclear weapons -- whether or not they are parties to the NPT -- bear a special responsibility, especially those possessing the largest nuclear arsenals.
- Current cases of concern relating to the DPRK and Iran need to be resolved through agreement on the verified voluntary renunciation of any nuclear weapons development programmes or sensitive nuclear facilities, and through assurances in the security and economic fields.

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\* *The WMDC is an independent international commission that is preparing proposals on all aspects of the weapons of mass destruction challenge. Its report will appear in early 2006.*

- A special responsibility also rests on the Security Council of the United Nations, representing the whole world community. In 1992 the Security Council underlined that the proliferation of weapons of mass destruction constitutes a threat to international peace and security and the members of the Council committed themselves to working to prevent the spread of such weapons. In 2004, in its resolution 1540, the Security Council reaffirmed this position. The Council needs to take steps to implement these commitments. It should establish a subcommittee for continuous monitoring and attach to it a small unit of experts for analysis and coordination and for maintaining a roster of trained inspectors ready to serve at the request of the Council.

The Review Conference offers an opportunity to build on agreements reached at previous review conferences in 1995 and 2000 and to reach understandings on measures that will secure the credibility and long-term viability and benefits of the Treaty, including the following:

- Ratification of the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty by the key remaining states, prohibiting all nuclear weapon tests, as a crucial step in promoting the aims of the NPT;
- Universal acceptance of the Additional Protocols of the IAEA for more effective verification of states' compliance with their safeguards obligations;
- Active cooperation among states and through the Security Council to prevent non-state actors from acquiring weapons of mass destruction, including the closure of illicit networks for and trafficking in nuclear items and materials, and global efforts to secure all nuclear fissile materials from theft or illicit use;
- Fulfillment by the Russian Federation and the United States of their commitments under the Strategic Offensive Reductions Treaty of 2002; the Russian Federation and the United States should promptly proceed with negotiations on further significant reductions of strategic offensive nuclear forces;
- Prompt and effective action by all states possessing nuclear weapons to diminish the role of these weapons in their security policies; to de-alert nuclear weapons; and to commit themselves to no-first use of nuclear weapons;
- Addressing the issue of non-strategic nuclear weapons, starting with commitments not to undertake new deployments of such weapons;
- The proposal for a zone free of weapons of mass destruction in the Middle East should be taken up for new and active consideration in the light of the political and security developments which have occurred in the area;
- Seeking ways to agree on a work programme for the Conference on Disarmament and, in the interim period, finding creative ways to address issues such as a fissile material cut-off, preventing an arms race in outer space, and nuclear disarmament;
- A verified global prohibition of the production of fissile materials for weapon purposes, and elimination, reduction or enhanced control of both existing holdings of and the production and processing of weapons-useable material in civilian nuclear programmes;
- Confirmation by the United Nations Security Council of its resolve to defuse any threats from weapons of mass destruction and to protect states from such threats.