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Conference on Disarmament - Statement by Ambassador Camille Petit on the negative security assurances (Geneva, August 8, 2024) [fr]

Subsidiary Body 4: Effective international arrangements to assure non-nuclear weapon States against the use or threat of use of nuclear weapons

Mr. Coordinator [Mohamed El Ghitany, Egypt],

First of all, I would like to congratulate you on your appointment as coordinator of this subsidiary body.

France regrets that we were unable to hold more in-depth discussions this year in the subsidiary bodies, including on negative security assurances.

I would like to make a number of comments on the principles which, in France's view, should guide the work of this subsidiary body, also with a view to its renewal in 2025.

1. Guarantees for non-nuclear weapon states.

As a responsible nuclear weapon state, France has made strong commitments to grant negative security assurances to non-nuclear weapon states. These commitments, endorsed by the United Nations Security Council in 1995, 2009 and 2016, have been reaffirmed at the highest level, by the President of the Republic, but also at regional level through support for the establishment of nuclear-weapon-free zones.

France:

- Gives guarantees to more than a hundred States through accession to the protocols of several treaties establishing nuclear-weapon-free zones in several regions (Tlateloclo, Rarotonga, Pelindaba and Semipalatinsk). France has also signed the cross-declaration on Mongolia's special status as a nuclear-weapon-free territory.
- Wishes to pursue dialogue with the ASEAN countries to enable them to accede as soon as possible to the Protocol to the Bangkok Treaty, thus making it possible to establish a nuclear-weapon-free zone in South-East Asia.
- Supports the creation of a zone free of weapons of mass destruction and their means of delivery in the Middle East, in accordance with the resolution adopted in 1995, on the basis of arrangements freely agreed by the States concerned, in a consensual and inclusive process, and without compromising anyone's security. In this capacity, France participates as an observer in the Conference established under the aegis of the United Nations.

2. A transparent and responsible doctrine.

France wishes to reiterate that its doctrine of deterrence is strictly defensive, and constitutes a guarantee in its own right, as the use of nuclear weapons can only be envisaged in extreme circumstances of self-defense, in accordance with the United Nations Charter.

France is committed to providing credible security assurances to non-nuclear-weapon states that comply with their commitments under the NPT. It also reiterates its commitment to the Declaration of the P5 Heads of State and Government of January 3, 2022, in which we affirmed that nuclear weapons, for as long as they exist, must be used for defensive purposes, deterrence and the prevention of war.

3. Finally, respecting the commitments we have made.

I would like to remind you that respect for security guarantees is the responsibility of all nuclear weapon states. In this respect, France condemns Russia's armed aggression against Ukraine and its violation of the Budapest Memorandum, which undermines the guarantees that all non-nuclear weapon states are entitled to receive from nuclear weapon states.

Mr. Coordinator,

As a nuclear weapon State, France reiterates its commitment to the respect of negative security assurances and will contribute constructively to the progress of the work of this subsidiary body. You can count on our support as we look forward to continuing our work in 2025.

Thank you very much.