

**Statement of Ambassador Bolat Nurgaliyev, Chairman of the FPRI Board at Expert discussion “Addressing the Legacy of Nuclear Testing: Lessons Learned and Future Prospects” Bern, August 24, 2023**

Dear Mr Wyder, thank you for your kind introduction.

Good morning, dear ladies and gentlemen!

I am thankful to the Embassy of Kazakhstan to Switzerland and the Swiss Peace Research Institute for the invitation to participate in the discussion. Ambassador Kairat Sarjanov and Director Laurent Goetschel quite extensively covered the topics of their presentations on path towards a nuclear weapons free world, nuclear disarmament and peacebuilding and thus laid a solid foundation for a meaningful debate among other participants.

I would like to offer several points which, in my humble opinion, are worthwhile.

First. Kazakhstan’s record as a staunch promoter of non-proliferation from the early years of its independence to this very moment is a well-thought out strategy, based on the recognition that its our solemn duty to be among proactive fighters for just, secure, inclusive, healthy world order as a precondition for eventual social and economic prosperity of our young Republic.

Second. While recognizing the significance of practical measures to strengthen non-proliferation regime and arms control regime and thus welcoming the efforts of the international community and individual states in these areas, we in Kazakhstan strongly believe that the utmost solution is total prohibition of nuclear weapons. When our country ratified the TPNW as the first multilateral, legally binding agreement to ban development, testing, stockpiling and use of nuclear weapons in their totality we, in Kazakhstan were guided by realization that all the previous arrangements in this realm, including the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons, the Comprehensive Nuclear Test Ban Treaty, the Convention on Nuclear Safety, a plethora of other nuclear weapons reduction treaties signed between nuclear powers, with all good political will and noble intentions accompanying such agreements did not turn into a panacea, did not become an effective remedy freeing the world from the looming nuclear Armageddon.

Third. The only effective, comprehensive, encompassing solution, essential precondition for global security is banning nuclear weapons as a

class of armaments. That is why President Kassym-Jomart Tokayev is consistently calling on the global community to support the provisions of the Universal Declaration on Building a World Free of Nuclear Weapons. In the Concept of Foreign Policy of Kazakhstan, which he signed in 2020, among the priorities – is mobilizing global support for total and comprehensive prohibition of nuclear weapons. Because of our bitter experience of suffering from the consequences of the Soviet era nuclear tests we consider ourselves as possessing moral right to call on other states to join international effort to eliminate the threat of annihilation of human civilization.

Forth. Unfortunately, the current stage of international relations is characterized by downshift in readiness for constructive interaction in dealing with clear and immediate threats to global and regional security. Instead of international solidarity and collective efforts to work out solutions for common challenges there is a crisis of trust, worsening of conflicts and confrontation, usage of sanctions as a normal instrument of conducting interstate relations, alarming erosion of basic principles of international law. It became okay for some powerful states to denounce their own obligations and withdraw from earlier signed and ratified agreements. Look, for example, at the fate of the Intermediate Nuclear Forces Treaty and the Open Skies Treaty, these were the documents which at the time of their entry in force were glorified as major breakthrough, as cornerstones of global strategic stability.

Fifth. Lessons learned in the process of Kazakhstan's struggle for nuclear disarmament and arms control. As you are well aware, in early 90-ies Kazakhstan along with Ukraine and Belarus were wooed to get rid of their nuclear arsenals, join the NPT and in return get the security assurances from the five permanent members of the UN Security Council. The NPT was viewed as a universal path to follow and lofty expectations of the international community were tied to the unwavering adherence of all states to the Treaty's provisions. But instead of non-proliferation we see expansion of the club of nuclear weapons states. What about implementation of Article 6 of the NPT committing the signatories, first of all the then five nuclear powers, to conduct in the spirit of good will negotiations on effective measures to stop nuclear arms race in the near future (and that was in 1968!) and bring about nuclear disarmament? And what about the Budapest Memorandum of 1994 with security assurances to Almaty, Kiyev and Minsk – is it still relevant under the changed geopolitical environment?

My final point. Irrespective of fluctuations on the international arena Kazakhstan will remain steadfast in mobilizing global solidarity in joint struggle to bring about the universalization of the Treaty on Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons. For us it is a solemn duty to contribute to the

implementation of vital interests of the humanity. May sound too elevated, but if every country- small, medium, big - will act, that specific goal is achievable.

Thank you for your kind attention.