

Statement of the Delegation of Ukraine
at the Conference on Humanitarian Impact of Nuclear Weapons
(*March 4 – 5, 2012*)

Mr. Chairman,
Distinguished Ladies and Gentlemen,

At the outset let me on behalf of the delegation of Ukraine thank the Norwegian Government for arranging this Conference and presenting a unique opportunity to look at the nuclear weapons from a new point of view. The impact of the use of nuclear weapons would be really devastating. Not only it would affect humanity, but would also be catastrophic for the climate of our planet and could eliminate the entire life on it, thus threatening to turn the Earth into an uninhabited desert.

The Ukrainian position on the nuclear weapons is well-known. We are fully committed to 3 pillars of the NPT.

Moreover, Ukraine knows from its own experience how appalling the impact of nuclear weapons can be. The country which survived the Chernobyl disaster back in 1986 and still overcoming its consequences does not need any explanation of what radiation is. Hundreds of thousands of people exposed to radiation died, many suffer from heavy and deadly diseases. The economic effects were devastating and we are still spending tremendous amounts of money to overcome the consequences of Chernobyl.

That is why we clearly understand that the very existence of nuclear weapons poses a threat to human survival. This understanding was crucial for taking an important decision to deny the third largest nuclear arsenal, inherited from the former Soviet Union, and join the NPT in 1994 as a non-nuclear weapon state.

Those days we naively believed that the cold war was over and that the nuclear threat would never become a reality again. We hoped that the example of Ukraine would be followed by other nations, thus making a dream of a nuclear-free world a reality. Regrettably, it did not happen.

Some politicians consider that the reason for that is the declarative character of the security assurances, provided for Ukraine by the P5 States back in 1994.

Nevertheless we are confident that effective disarmament and nonproliferation measures should make our world more secure and we are doing our part. At the Washington Nuclear Security Summit, Ukraine announced an important decision to get rid of all its stocks of highly enriched uranium by 2012. And this decision was duly and timely implemented.

In this regard we are committed to support any international efforts which are aimed at reducing the nuclear threat. From this point of view we perceive the initiative of the Norwegian Government to convene the Conference on Humanitarian Impact of Nuclear Weapons. And we are ready to render our supports and assistance in order to promote the goals of this forum.

Next year we will be celebrating 20th anniversary of our joining to the NPT as the non-nuclear state and we will use this memorable date to draw the attention of international community to the world nuclear dossier to be closed one day.

But let us be realistic. There will be no immediate effect, if any, from the international initiatives to ban nuclear weapons if they are not supported by the possessor states. And the fact that P-5 and other actual nuclear nations are not with us today is a bad signal. But we hope that this forum will draw the attention of the decision-makers in the countries concerned to the humanitarian impact of nuclear weapons and thus make a small, but a very important step towards a safer world.

Thank you, Mr. Chairman.