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**Opening Remarks at PPNN Seminar for Diplomatic
Representatives**

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Summary:

Written version of oral address to the PPNN Seminar for Diplomatic Representatives, includes introduction to planning and management activities of the conferences.

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OPENING REMARKS AT PPNN SEMINAR FOR DIPLOMATIC REPRESENTATIVES

Your Highness, Excellencies, Ladies and Gentlemen,

Welcome to the seminar of the Programme for Promoting Nuclear Non-Proliferation!

Before we begin, I should like to help set the background for our meeting by saying something about the purpose and the activities of our Programme.

The Programme for Promoting Nuclear Non-Proliferation - or as we say, briefly but inelegantly, PPNN - was set up three years ago as an international, non-governmental project, with the long-term purpose of helping to strengthen the international nuclear non-proliferation system, and the immediate aim of promoting the success of the 1990 Review Conference.

Today's meeting is part of one of the semi-annual sessions of the Programme's Core Group. Our sessions are usually devoted in part to the planning and management of the Programme and in part to a discussion of topical issues in the area of nuclear non-proliferation. At each session, members of the Core Group and invited outside experts speak on various topics in that broad area, with particular relevance to the review of the implementation of the NPT. From time to time interested non-members are invited to attend the substantive portion of those sessions.

We have chosen Geneva for our first meeting of 1990, so as to expand it with a seminar for diplomatic representatives of states parties to the NPT who are stationed here and thus are likely to be involved in the review conference.

Five years ago the third NPT review conference was held here. That succeeded where the preceding one had failed. It agreed on an endorsement of the Treaty as essential to international peace and security and reaffirmed the commitment of the participating states to its purposes.

PPNN is the result of our attempt to find the causes of that success and if possible help to create conditions that would make it likely that this year's conference also succeeds.

It is clearly impossible to identify a single reason for the positive outcome of the last review conference. But we did find one factor that may have helped: the presence of a number of persons who were keenly aware of the issues, who knew the history of the Treaty, who perceived its inherent strengths and weaknesses and saw the problems of its implementation; who knew

the politics involved and the ways to find helpful compromises.

That might have been just a one-time phenomenon, not to occur again to the same extent or the same effect. Diplomats move; civil servants retire. International officials change their tasks. It might well have been thought that the phenomenon of 1985 was an isolated event.

So PPNN set out to find ways that would help promote a repetition of the results of 1985. We realised that it would serve no purpose to try and recreate the conditions which prevailed then. We saw that preparations for a review conference such as this should be part of an ongoing process of reexamination, a continuing dialogue on the operation and reenforcement of the non-proliferation system as a whole, not limited to the Treaty, nor even only to purely nuclear matters.

More so, we recognised that a continuing process of review should be a creative effort which would need a constant supply of new, knowledgeable people who should know the history of the various instruments and the background of the problems and were able to put that knowledge to practical use. So we looked for means by which the material and experience collected by earlier actors on the non-proliferation scene could be imparted to those newly called to deal with it. We sought ways to exchange ideas on questions of non-proliferation among present experts and those aiming to be the practitioners of the future.

What has been clear to us from the start is that one cannot just write a manual, hand it to a new group of players and expect them to take it from there. We recognise that, in the historical continuum, political, diplomatic, security developments are unbroken - the solutions may be differently conceived in every generation but basic conditions change little. Each generation has its own priorities but its freedom of action is limited by the same factors that have played a part all along.

We feel that we should share experience, to save others unnecessary travail. We think that it would be wasteful if the wheel were to be re-invented every few years. We believe that we can help build bridges between past knowledge and future practice - not to keep that practice from changing, but to assist the practitioners in shaping it as they chose.

And in particular, we try to promote dialogue. We seek means to share our thoughts and point to the issues we think are involved in the question of nuclear non-proliferation, to invite comments and new ideas.

Those considerations should shape this meeting. We hope to highlight as many as possible of the issues involved in the coming review conference, talk about the way they were dealt

with before, discuss with you how they might be handled this time and seek views on the way you approach them.

Our Programme is obviously not neutral in its view of the Non-Proliferation Treaty. I for one see it as being more important now than it has ever been for international security and stability. I believe that the reenforcement of the global non-proliferation system and the recognition of the NPT as a factor of major positive impact in international relations should be given high priority in contemporary diplomacy.

The international environment of the moment is volatile and fraught with danger. Relations between countries change every day. While the risk of nuclear war between the major powers has receded, disarmament and arms control negotiations proceed in fits and starts. There are convincing reports of the proliferation of weapons of mass destruction, and in areas where the non-proliferation regime is incomplete, concerns about possible armed conflict are aggravated by the presumed nuclear capabilities of the opponents.

In that environment a strong NPT is a fundamental element of stability and security. There is little point in speculating what the world would have looked like without the NPT, but I daresay that Europe might not be the serene place it is, so relatively undisturbed by the dramatic political changes that are taking place there. The impact of the NPT cannot be quantified but its confidence-building function is plain.

It is obviously exceedingly important that the review conference just ahead should come to the conclusion that the world is better off with a widely supported non-proliferation treaty, even one many consider imperfect in conception and implementation. But even if the conference is a success like the previous one, and endorses the Treaty's importance, we still cannot rest on our laurels. Non-proliferation should be a continuing process, as is proliferation. This year's conference will set the stage for the extension conference of 1995. Once is done, one has to look further, for ever better ways of protecting the world against the tyranny of weapons of mass destruction.

We hope that this seminar can contribute to the process.

One more comment: no records will be kept of our discussions. The only report made on the meeting will be one intended for PPNN's funders and for our own records, and to the extent that this notes any views expressed here, there will be no attribution.

This being said, I am pleased to open the seminar.