



**Opening remarks by Mr. Sergei A. Ordzhonikidze
United Nations Under-Secretary-General
Director-General of the United Nations Office at Geneva**

**Celebrating the 40th anniversary of
the entry into force of the NPT**

**Event organized by the
United Nations Institute for Disarmament Research**

**Palais des Nations, Geneva
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**Ms. Hitchens
Distinguished panellists
Excellencies
Ladies and Gentlemen:**

It is a pleasure for me to welcome you all to the Palais des Nations and to celebrate with you the 40th anniversary of the entry into force of the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons. Allow me, first of all, to thank UNIDIR for another timely event. I should also like to extend a warm welcome to our speakers for being with us to share their experience and their views.

It is true, of course, that the NPT has come under stress in recent years. But there should be no doubt: the treaty continues to form the cornerstone of the global nuclear disarmament and non-proliferation regime, establishing the framework for promoting the peaceful uses of nuclear energy. This is also why the eighth Review Conference in New York in May is so critical for international peace and security and why the international community looks to this event with both anticipation and concern.

While anniversaries often invite us to look back at past achievements, I think this is an important moment to look ahead and reflect on some of the challenges that will need to be addressed to strengthen the regime. And I hope we can do that together today.

The current momentum in the area of nuclear disarmament, strongly supported by the United Nations Secretary-General, including through his own five-point action plan, is quite different from the atmosphere that prevailed when the 2005 Review Conference took place.

Although Member States were not able to agree on substantive recommendations to transmit to the Review Conference, the third Preparatory Committee, held last year, did manage to agree on the agenda and a number of procedural issues. The constructive and collegial atmosphere at the meeting has given some hope that the review conference could produce tangible results to advance the disarmament and non-proliferation agenda.

It is not my intention to open the debate that should be held in May in New York, but allow me to offer a few comments:

The NPT commits nuclear weapon states to nuclear disarmament. Several states have taken important steps towards elimination of nuclear weapons, not least the recent efforts by the Russian Federation and the United States to negotiate a START successor. Strong emphasis is being placed on ratification of the CTBT by those members whose ratification is necessary for its entry into force. For its part, the Conference on Disarmament is doing its utmost to capitalize on the consensus decision in 2009 on a Programme of Work to start substantive negotiations on a treaty on fissile materials and to address other key issues.

A number of issues related to the right of States to the peaceful use of nuclear energy will also be on the table. International cooperation on nuclear energy management, including possible multilateral approaches to the fuel cycle, will be one of the key issues to discuss.

With 189 States Parties, there are – of course – a large number of different national positions. Forging consensus on priorities is a matter of political will. And the role of the President-designate of the Review Conference, Ambassador Cabactulan who is here with us today, will be crucial in this regard. We look forward to hearing more about your expectations, based on your consultations so far.

We should not lose the momentum that has been building for progress on nuclear disarmament and non-proliferation. The NPT Review Conference will – to a large extent – be the litmus test as to whether the positive rhetoric can be translated into real progress. We know from the current challenges in the Conference on Disarmament that it is not always straightforward to move from intention to negotiation. It is my hope that the NPT Review Conference, with a positive outcome, could also send an important signal to move forward the efforts of the Conference on Disarmament.

We need to build on and sustain the momentum to bring us closer towards the widely shared goal of a world free of nuclear weapons.

I wish you most interesting and fruitful discussions.

Thank you very much.