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2016 Nuclear Security Summit

In larger security: looking ahead

Joint Statement by
Algeria, Argentina, Brazil, Chile, Egypt, Indonesia, Kazakhstan, Malaysia, Mexico, New Zealand, Nigeria, Philippines, Singapore, South Africa, Thailand and Vietnam

1. The need for a more encompassing view of various global nuclear challenges was the focus of the Joint Statement “In larger security: a comprehensive approach to nuclear security”, issued at the 2014 Hague Summit. We believe the core message of that Joint Statement is still valid and more urgent than ever.

2. As the process of Nuclear Security Summits (NSS) draws to a close, we recognise, among its important achievements, that greater international awareness has been raised about the fundamental responsibility of States to ensure effective nuclear security of all nuclear materials, including those used in nuclear weapons.

3. While we understand that the security of nuclear weapons remains the primary responsibility of States possessing them, the international community has the right to demand from such States decisive steps to secure, reduce and irreversibly eliminate their nuclear arsenals and their huge stocks of weapon-grade materials (highly enriched uranium and separated plutonium).
4. Indeed, nuclear security cannot be strengthened if we confine our efforts to the relatively small quantity of nuclear materials in peaceful use, while ignoring the dangers posed by the vast quantities of materials involved in nuclear weapons programs.

5. The additional risks stemming from the possibility of non-State actors having access to nuclear weapons or to weapons-grade materials only heightens the need to expedite nuclear disarmament. As long as such weapons and materials exist, there will be risks, including that they get into the hands of terrorists, thereby leading to possible attacks with unprecedented mass casualties.

6. The NSS Communiqués reaffirm our shared goals of nuclear disarmament, nuclear nonproliferation and the peaceful uses of nuclear energy, thus emphasising the interlinkages between such goals and the broader context in which nuclear security, to be consistent and ultimately effective, must be addressed.

7. In the same context, the 2015 IAEA General Conference, in particular, acknowledged that nuclear security contributes to the broader goal of strengthening international peace and security, and that further progress is urgently needed in nuclear disarmament.

8. Serious questions about the future of the international nuclear non-proliferation and disarmament regime have been raised with the failure of the 2015 NPT Review Conference to reach agreement on an outcome document. Regrettably, this failure highlights the deep divisions lingering within the Treaty’s membership and the lack of political will by some to take further steps on nuclear disarmament.

9. The failure of the Comprehensive Test Ban Treaty (CTBT) to enter into force, now 20 years after its conclusion, has also negatively impacted the international nuclear non-proliferation
and disarmament regime. We emphasise the need for rapid entry into force and universalisation of the Treaty.

10. Moreover, the reiteration of deterrence doctrines, the continued existence of nuclear arsenals, and the modernisation plans, activities and long-term investments being made into nuclear weapons programs have become a cause of great international concern. Extended reliance on defence policies based on nuclear weapons may well fuel proliferation, hamper progress towards nuclear disarmament, and undermine nuclear security worldwide.

11. The catastrophic humanitarian consequences of the possible detonation, either by intent or by accident, of the most lethal and indiscriminate device ever conceived, are more than apparent. 70 years after the adoption of the very first UN General Assembly Resolution aimed at eliminating nuclear weapons and all other weapons adaptable to mass destruction, 45 years after the NPT’s entry into force and 25 years after the end of the Cold War, the continued existence of thousands of nuclear weapons, many still on high-alert status, remains the greatest and most immediate risk for humanity.

12. We reiterate our firm conviction that the total elimination of nuclear weapons is the only absolute guarantee against the use or threat of use of such weapons.

13. Following the conclusion of the NSS process, it is imperative that future endeavours to strengthen nuclear security in all relevant international fora be guided by mutually reinforcing measures to address the security risks posed by nuclear arsenals and the vast stocks of materials associated with nuclear weapons programs.

14. We can only achieve an effective and sustainable nuclear security architecture when international efforts are predicated on an approach that promotes nuclear security along with nuclear disarmament and nuclear non-proliferation. Such an approach should be based on the strict and full implementation of relevant international obligations, and not exclude other
initiatives or legally binding instruments aimed at the prohibition and elimination of nuclear arsenals.