

Brief introductory remarks of Amb. J. Enkhsaikhan at the RTD
“Promoting further nuclear-weapon-free zones: challenges and opportunities”

DA, Vienna

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Allow me to extend my warmest welcome to you all. I would like, like Amb. Winkler, to thank you all sincerely for responding positively to our invitation to participate in and contribute to the round-table discussion (RTD) on “Promoting further nuclear-weapon-free zones: challenges and opportunities”. I am deeply grateful to you, Minister Pahr, experienced diplomat and distinguished statesman of the host country and a good friend of Mongolia, for having accepted the invitation to be the keynote speaker of today’s event and share your views and thoughts on how to promote in today’s conditions the noble goals of nuclear disarmament and non-proliferation.

Some may ask why Mongolia is organizing such an event. In the first half of the past 100 years since it regained its independence in 1911, Mongolia has been mostly an object of great power politics and different accords. In the second half, with the membership of the United Nations in 1961, it became an equal and sovereign subject of international relations. It believes that small and medium states can and should play an active role in international relations, especially when it comes to issues of security and well-being of their peoples. The comparative advantage is that they are at times more vulnerable and thus more sensitive to the events or developments that can affect their security or other legitimate interests. Therefore they need to speak out and act.

Being part of the community of nations, Mongolia tries, where it deems useful and feasible, to play an active role, be not only a consumer of common global good, but also a contributor to it, in its own way. Thus during the cold war it initiated the holding of annual international weeks devoted to disarmament that time-wise preceded the First committee meetings of the General Assembly. The intention was to promote wider mobilization of world public opinion and NGOs in support of disarmament. This proved to be practically useful for broadening the discussions beyond bipolar recriminations and discussing numbers.

Mongolia has been one of the first states to ratify the NPT, the CTBT and some other international disarmament conventions, thus committing itself to the agreements reached and at the same time contributing to meeting the requirements of the provisions on their entry into force. Its contribution of the Convention on Conventional Weapons and its additional protocols are well known. It also tries to promote strengthening of existing and establishment of new nuclear-weapon-free zones and takes an active part in peace-keeping operations and observer missions.

It is the desire to promote informal discussion and exchange of views on issues related to NWFZs and promoting implementation of the final document of the 2010 NPT Review conference, that the Mongolian mission has proposed to hold today’s discussion. The colleagues whom I had approached before asking the Diplomatic Academy of Vienna to co-host it,

welcomed the idea. This meeting is just one of the venues to exchange information and views on how to pursue the noble objectives of nuclear disarmament and non-proliferation in today's conditions. This year alone a number of meetings have been held to this end. Thus Uruguay and a group of other interested states are working on a special disarmament conference initiative, the second meeting of which was attended by representatives of 20 states, including Mongolia. The annual Carnegie International Policy Conference was held late last month, which addressed many issues related to nuclear security and disarmament. In Vienna Monterey Nonproliferation Strategy Group met in February and discussed the issues connected with a WMD Free zone in the Middle East. A few weeks ago we all witnessed inauguration of the Vienna Center for Disarmament and Non-Proliferation, which is expected to serve as a platform for independent expertise in the field of nuclear security. Today's meeting can be considered as a contribution to such informal probing processes. Therefore it is our hope that it would be informative, stimulating and useful.

As pointed out in the letter of invitation, in keeping with the modest objective of the meeting, there will be no attempt to summarize discussions nor produce any recommendation or statement. Therefore the organizers are looking forward to a rich and informative debate and exchange of views.