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17 February 2010

Dear Prof. Cotta-Ramusino,

I am writing to express my appreciation for having been given the opportunity to contribute to the recent Pugwash Conference on Nuclear Disarmament and Non-proliferation jointly hosted in Milan on 29 January 2010 by Pugwash and the University of Milan (Universita' degli Studi di Milano).

The meeting provided an excellent opportunity for a fruitful exchange of views, given that preparations are already well underway in many countries for the upcoming 2010 NPT Review Conference. Efforts such as Pugwash's and yours personally to facilitate the debate on the many security challenges posed by nuclear weapons are indeed very timely, amid growing interest worldwide in the pursuit of a world free of nuclear weapons.

The Milan Document on Nuclear Disarmament and Non-proliferation, which was issued following the 29 January conference, brings a valuable contribution to advancing the important discussion on nuclear disarmament and non-proliferation, with an eye on the upcoming 2010 NPT Review Conference.

Certainly, progress in the area of nuclear disarmament and non-proliferation depends heavily upon a foundation of cooperation with Member States, therefore forecasting the outcome of the 2010 NPT Review Conference is an extraordinarily difficult undertaking.

Challenges remain, therefore swift and determined action is needed to preserve and strengthen the NPT. The Parties need to work together to achieve the Treaty's primary goals with the highest possible levels of accountability and transparency. A positive outcome should be based on a balanced approach to the three pillars of the NPT: disarmament, non-proliferation, and peaceful uses of nuclear energy, backed by a common desire to avoid the negative result of 2005.

Prof. Paolo Cotta-Ramusino
Secretary General of Pugwash Conferences
On Science and World Affairs
Milan, Italy

I am encouraged by both national and international deliberations, which show that there are extraordinary openings to advance the nuclear disarmament agenda, and I am confident that support for the NPT remains strong among the States Parties.

Fostering awareness in civil society of our causes and support for our endeavors is also important, and as such, the assistance of organisations such as Pugwash remains crucial. I therefore look forward to continue our close cooperation, and wish you every success in your future endeavours.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'S. Duarte', with a long horizontal flourish extending to the right.

Sergio Duarte
High Representative for Disarmament Affairs