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SYMPOSIUM ON STRENGTHENING THE NUCLEAR NONPROLIFERATION TREATY

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WELCOME

by John Scales Avery, Chairman
Danish National Pugwash Group

Your excellencies, members of the Danish Parliament, ladies and gentlemen. Welcome to this symposium on “Strengthening the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty and the International Atomic Energy Agency”. We are fortunate to have both an extremely distinguished list of speakers and an equally distinguished audience. Thank you all for being here.

The NPT is under stress. It needs our support, and it needs to be strengthened. The treaty was never designed to divide the world permanently into nuclear and non-nuclear states. It was designed to rid the world of nuclear weapons. But the states which possess these weapons have failed to fulfil their disarmament obligations under Article VI of the treaty. To save the treaty, they must now rapidly fulfil these obligations.

In the second half of the program today, three speakers will discuss ways of strengthening the NPT. Pol D'Hyvetter from Belgium will discuss the Hiroshima-Nagasaki Protocol, while Alyn Ware from New Zealand and Carlos Vargas from Costa Rica will discuss the Model Nuclear Weapons Convention.

The International Atomic Energy Agency also needs to be strengthened: Since light water reactors use low enriched uranium as fuel, it follows that states using such reactors must either be able to purchase low enriched uranium on the world market or else possess enrichment facilities. But if they possess

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enrichment facilities, for example high-speed centrifuges, these can be used to produce weapon-usable highly-enriched uranium, and it becomes impossible to distinguish between civil and military nuclear programs.

IAEA Director General Mohamed El Baradei has called the spread of enrichment and reprocessing facilities the "Achilles heel" of the non-proliferation regime. He has proposed that the entire nuclear fuel cycle, including the production of low enriched uranium fuel rods, and the reprocessing of spent rods, be internationalized. The internationalization of reprocessing is necessary because spent fuel rods contain weapons-usable plutonium.

The title of Dr. Hans Blix's lecture, "Disarmament after the US election", points to another goal to this symposium. We want to demonstrate that there is a rapidly-growing global consensus that a nuclear-weapon-free world can and must be achieved in the very near future.

President-Elect Barak Obama has stated that he will make the goal of eliminating nuclear weapons worldwide a central element of US nuclear policy. Similarly strong statements have recently come from Prime Ministers Gordon Brown of the United Kingdom and Kevin Rudd of Australia. Last February, the Norwegian government hosted a conference devoted to developing the vision of a nuclear-weapon-free world. We hope that this vision will become more clear and strong during our symposium.