



**Permanent Mission of Saint Vincent and the Grenadines
to the United Nations**

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Statement

By

Hon. Sir Louis Straker

Deputy Prime Minister & Minister of Foreign Affairs, Trade and Commerce

**High-Level Meeting to Commemorate and Promote the International Day for
the Total Elimination of Nuclear Weapons**

United Nations General Assembly

2 October 2020

New York

Excellencies, Ladies and Gentlemen,

The catastrophic humanitarian and environmental consequences of nuclear weapons are regrettably well documented and have left an indelible mark on the international community. While the global number of nuclear weapons has significantly decreased, the existence of these weapons of mass destruction undoubtedly constitutes a threat to international peace and security.

As the world grapples with a pandemic of historic proportions, global anxiety is further heightened by the risk of nuclear warfare. Geopolitical tensions are rapidly escalating, and persistent efforts are being made towards the modernization of nuclear arsenals. The prioritization of economic and military self-interests continues to fragment multilateralism and paralyze efforts aimed at achieving consensus on a common vision and path towards complete, verifiable, and irreversible denuclearization.

Multilateral cooperation is critical in order to effectively address legitimate security concerns and nuclear-weapon states ought to engage in in-depth and constructive dialogue concerning their various nuclear doctrines. This is key to building confidence, improving transparency,

safeguarding peace and security and to make certain that the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development is realized.

The Non-Proliferation Treaty remains the cornerstone of the global non-proliferation regime. Subsequent treaties and agreements, in particular the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty, the Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons - *to which Saint Vincent and the Grenadines became the 24th state party in July 2019* - and the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action, have made significant contributions in curbing the proliferation of nuclear weapons and preventing the diversion of nuclear energy from peaceful uses. We remain in support of these essential instruments and we recognize the indispensable roles and the valuable contributions of the International Atomic Energy Agency and the Agency for the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons in Latin America and the Caribbean in this regard.

Excellencies,

Only through the total elimination of nuclear weapons can the international community be assured that the horrifying events of 1945 will never be unintentionally nor deliberately repeated. Saint Vincent and the Grenadines, as a member of the first nuclear-weapons-free zone in a densely populated area and the Community of Latin American and

Caribbean States' "Zone of Peace", is committed to the attainment of a world free from nuclear weapons.

A nuclear war cannot be won and must never be fought. We must recommit to reinforcing and preserving the norm against the use of nuclear weapons. We must refrain from embarking on steps which are antithetical to the principles on which the United Nations still stands 75 years since its founding. We must all act in the common interest of humankind.

I thank you.