

OPEN-ENDED WORKING GROUP
TAKING FORWARD MULTILATERAL NUCLEAR DISARMAMENT NEGOTIATIONS
Geneva, Palais des nations
CLOSING BRIEF FOR THE CHAIR

Date & time:	Friday, 13 May 2016,
Venue:	Conference room XIX
Content:	Summary by the Chair, the way forward, Exchange of views
Chair:	Thani Thongphakdi, Ambassador of Thailand

[Chair to call the meeting to order]

Kindly take your seats, Ladies and Gentlemen, so that we can start our meeting.

Excellences,

Distinguished delegates,

We are approaching the end of this two-week long series of plenary sessions of the open-ended working group. As per the indicative timetable contained in A/AC.286/WP.21/Rev.1, I have planned the meeting today to wrap-up our work and discuss the way ahead in preparation for the August meetings and the consideration and conclusion of the final report which this group shall submit to the General Assembly pursuant to OP7 of resolution 70/33.

You will all agree that these were very intensive and productive sessions. We had a frank, robust and exhaustive discussions on all the main substantive items mandated by General Assembly in resolution 70/33. As expected, the debate was not an easy one and if agreement could be observed on several important topics, there were also persisting differences in views and approached on others. Notwithstanding the differences in national positions and priorities, however, I do appreciate the constructive and interactive debate and the abundance of ideas and suggestions expressed in your statements and the over sixty working papers submitted by States, civil society and academia. This is very impressive - it will take me a while to go through all of these papers again when preparing the final report. This is also an encouraging sign that despite the continuing stalemate in some traditional disarmament fora, this organization is strong and sufficiently flexible and creative thus providing an opportunity to move forward the multilateral nuclear disarmament agenda.

Before sharing my perception of our work during the last two weeks, I would like to express my wholehearted gratitude and appreciation to Director-General Michael Møller, Secretary-General of the

Conference on Disarmament and to Under Secretary-General Kim Won-soo, High Representative for Disarmament Affairs for their inspiring words of support and encouragement to our work and the cause of nuclear disarmament. I was also particularly pleased to welcome special guest speaker Ms. Setsuko Thurlow, a Habakusha who has survived the bombing of Nagasaki and whose emotional testimony of the horror of the nuclear explosion touched our hearts.

My special gratitude goes again to all the panelists for their very competent and comprehensive presentations which have informed so well our deliberations as well as to all those who have taken their time and have prepared working papers or taken part in our deliberations.

Allow me now to present my wrap-up of the work of this group. Needless to say that this summary reflects my own views on some of the main points raised during the various phases of the Group's work over the past two weeks. It is not meant as an exhaustive summary nor does it attempt to give any weight to any of the points discussed in terms of the level of support enjoyed by any particular measure.

Transparency measures related to the risks associated with existing nuclear weapons

- Many participants emphasized the importance of the principle of transparency, which, along with the principles of irreversibility and verifiability, play an essential role in the nuclear disarmament process.
- In this regard, the importance of ensuring access to information reported by States possessing nuclear weapons to the public and to neighboring States was stressed. The need to protect sensitive national security information was also emphasized.
- The Group discussed specific types of information, including as contained in Annex 2 of the synthesis paper, that could be reported by the States possessing nuclear weapons to a reporting mechanism established within the framework of the United Nations.
- In addition to these measures, the Group also discussed information that could be reported by other States, including non-nuclear-weapon States.
- It was noted that many of these measures built upon deliberations held in the context of the NPT review process and at the 2015 Review Conference.

Measures to reduce and eliminate the risk of accidental, mistaken, unauthorized or intentional nuclear weapon detonations

- The Group discussed a number of factors that contribute to the current and growing risk of a nuclear weapon detonation.

- It was stressed that only way to eliminate these risks is by achieving the complete elimination of nuclear weapons. It was acknowledged that the precise nature of the risks was difficult to assess given the lack of transparency in nuclear weapon programmes.
- There was a particular focus in many interventions on the risk posed by maintaining nuclear weapons at high levels of alert and on the effect that these postures have on the process of nuclear disarmament.
- The Group discussed measures to reduce risks and increase safety, pending the complete elimination of nuclear weapons, including as contained in Annex 3 of the synthesis paper.
- These included, inter alia, measures for reducing: stockpiles of nuclear weapons; their role in doctrines; and their operational readiness. They also included the abandonment of launch-on-warning postures as well as measures to build safety and security and to protect command and control systems.
- It was emphasized the pursuit of such measures should not imply support for any possession or use of nuclear weapons.

Additional measures to increase awareness and understanding of the complexity of and interrelationship between the wide range of humanitarian consequences that would result from any nuclear detonation

- The Group discussed the role of actors at all levels within the international community in enhancing public awareness. This included efforts by the United Nations system and civil society, including non-governmental organizations, academia, parliamentarians, the mass media and individuals.
- Considerable emphasis was placed on the importance of disarmament and non-proliferation education, especially on the need to promote critical thinking in the next generation.
- The importance of observing the relevant international days declared by the General Assembly, including the International Day for the Total Elimination of Nuclear Weapons and the International Day Against Nuclear Tests, was mentioned.
- The Group discussed specific measures to increase awareness on humanitarian consequence, including as contained in Annex 4 of the synthesis paper.
- These included measures for, inter alia: promoting disarmament and non-proliferation education; promoting the role of atomic bomb survivors; and promoting understanding of the interconnected consequences of a nuclear weapon detonation on development, the environment,

climate change, cultural heritage, human rights, children and its particular gendered impacts. They also included measures to integrate nuclear disarmament into other policy areas, to elevate awareness at the highest levels of government and to reach out more effectively to youth.

Concrete effective legal measures, legal provisions and norms that will need to be concluded to attain and maintain a world without nuclear weapons

- The Group broadly considered the main features of and relationships between four distinct approaches or pathways for the pursuit of a world without nuclear weapons, including a comprehensive nuclear weapons convention, a nuclear weapon ban treaty, a framework agreement and a progressive approach based upon building blocks. The features of a hybrid approach were also raised.
- The Group also considered possible measures and elements that could be pursued through one or more of the various approaches and contained in a legal instrument or set of instruments.
- These measures included prohibitions addressing issues such as acquisition, stockpiling, possession, use or threat of use, research and development, testing, production of fissile materials, transfers, deployments, transit, visitation and over-flight and financing as well as any assistance, encouragement or inducement in any prohibited acts.
- These measures also included other provisions and arrangements addressing issue such as bilateral, plurilateral and multilateral nuclear arms reductions, the rights and needs of victims, decontamination, verification, processes for eliminating nuclear warheads and delivery systems, removing stockpiles of fissile materials, nuclear safety and security, institutional arrangements, compliance and dispute resolution, confidence-building and security assurances.

Other measures that could contribute to taking forward multilateral nuclear disarmament negotiations

- Finally, the Group discussed other measures that could play an important role in the nuclear disarmament process, including trust and confidence-building measures to create conditions necessary to facilitate further major reductions in nuclear arsenals, as well as the consolidation and strengthening of existing nuclear-weapon-free zones and the establishment of new zones.
- Various views were expressed on the balance between security and humanitarian consideration, the relationship between nuclear deterrence and nuclear disarmament, threat perceptions relating regional threats and tensions involving States possessing nuclear weapons and on the how to reconcile contending concepts of national security.

Before opening the floor for your reactions, I would like to also advise you on my intentions for the way forward towards the consideration and adoption of the final report of this group.

The discussions in February and May have emphasized important elements and measures towards the global zero. It is now my turn to do my homework and prepare the first draft of the final report. My intention is to prepare a factual report reflecting as much as possible the discussions held and proposals made. This first draft will be circulated to your attention no later than end of July – early August.

For its consideration and adoption I have tentatively scheduled the remaining six formal plenary sessions, as follows:

- two sessions on Friday, 5 August,
- two sessions on Tuesday and Wednesday, 16 and 17 August, in the afternoon, and
- two sessions on Friday, 19 August, for the final consideration and adoption of the report.

If deemed necessary and depending on the progress made, I have also planned the possibility of holding a few informal meetings between 8 and 19 August in conference room XXVI.

This schedule of activities has been coordinated with the Polish presidency of the CD and will not overlap with any activity in the Conference of Disarmament. I am grateful for the kind cooperation of the delegation of Poland in this regard.

Distinguished delegates,

The floor is now open for your comments and suggestions. I recognize...

[Chair to give the floor to delegations requesting it]

Is there any delegation that will like to take the floor at this stage?

[Chair to give the floor to delegations requesting it]

This does not seem to be the case. That concludes our work today and this week. Before concluding I would like to express once again my gratitude and appreciation to all the representatives of States, civil society and academia for your active participation in the work of this body, as well as to all the panelists and experts who have informed our activities.

We will resume our work on 5 August at 10h00 AM in conference room XIX with the consideration of the draft final report.

This meeting stands adjourned.

[Meeting ends]