C1: Taking forward multilateral nuclear disarmament negotiations

Explanation of Vote by Norway’s Special Representative for Disarmament Mr. Knut Langeland, 27 October 2016.

Chair,

We are at a critical juncture in the work to promote nuclear disarmament and non-proliferation. There is broad agreement on our ultimate objective: the full elimination of nuclear weapons. At the same time, there are divergent views on how to achieve and maintain a world without nuclear weapons.

We believe that it is more important than ever to find ways to build confidence between countries. It is vital that we facilitate progress in the areas of disarmament, non-proliferation and arms control. Genuine progress on disarmament will enhance our collective security.

Norway is deeply committed to this work. Last April, the Storting (the Norwegian parliament) agreed on a consensus motion that requests the Norwegian Government to actively work for a world free of nuclear arms and to promote the implementation of the Non-Proliferation Treaty (NPT), to be a driving force for non-proliferation and disarmament with a view to the balanced, mutual, irreversible and verifiable elimination of nuclear weapons, and on these grounds to take a long-term perspective in working for a legally binding framework to achieve this goal.

We fully understand and sympathize with the impatience of all those who worked on, and supported, the resolution Taking Forward Multilateral Nuclear Disarmament Negotiations. Progress on nuclear disarmament has been too slow. And it has been too slow because nuclear-weapon states have failed to engage wholeheartedly and with genuine determination in this area, despite having committed themselves unequivocally to eliminating their nuclear arsenals.

In our view, a legally binding framework should be based on the balanced, mutual, irreversible and verifiable elimination of nuclear weapons. This resolution, however, calls for the legal measures to be put in place first. For this sequence to be effective, all possessor states need to participate, as they did in the process leading to the conclusion of the Chemical Weapons Convention. We need to recognize that in the present circumstances nuclear-weapon states are not ready to engage in negotiations on a prohibition of nuclear weapons. Negotiations in which nuclear-weapon states do not take part will not have any real impact.

We all want these weapons to be eliminated. The devastation they would cause if used, intentionally or not, is totally unacceptable. This was clearly highlighted at the fact-based Oslo conference on humanitarian consequences
of nuclear weapons in 2013. The world should never experience the horrors of Hiroshima and Nagasaki again. Therefore, we are deeply concerned of the Democratic People’s Republic of Korea’s continued nuclear testing and continued development of missile technology.

Regrettably, the Open-ended Working Group on Nuclear Disarmament was unable to reach consensus on its report to the UN General Assembly. Despite this, the deliberations in the Working Group demonstrated a strong commitment to move the nuclear disarmament agenda forward.

We now pledge to intensify our efforts. The elimination of nuclear weapons can only be achieved through concrete and effective measures. That is why Norway has taken an active role and launched several initiatives aimed at promoting nuclear disarmament and non-proliferation.

We believe further progress can be achieved by developing nuclear disarmament verification tools that build confidence and pave the way for actual disarmament and arms reductions. It is our firm belief that future verifications mechanisms should include multilateral components.

We must work for the full implementation of the NPT. At the outset of the new NPT review cycle, we need to work actively to ensure that it focuses on the substantive issues, with the clear aim of adopting an outcome document that brings our joint disarmament efforts forward. Moreover, we must work diligently to avoid any further proliferation of nuclear weapons and nuclear material.

Chair,

Let me conclude by reiterating Norway’s continued and strong commitment to our joint efforts to achieve a world without nuclear weapons.

Thank you.