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Open-ended Working Group taking forward multilateral nuclear disarmament negotiations¹

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Item 5 of the agenda

Taking forward multilateral nuclear disarmament negotiations

Disarmament and Non-Proliferation Education*

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1. As recognized by the Secretary General in his Report on the United Nations Study on Disarmament and Non-Proliferation Education (A/57/124), “There has never been a greater need for education in the areas of disarmament and non-proliferation, especially with regard to weapons of mass destruction. The overall objective of disarmament and non-proliferation education and training is to impart knowledge and skills to individuals to empower them to make their contribution, as national and world citizens, to the achievement of concrete disarmament and non-proliferation measures and the ultimate goal of general and complete disarmament under effective international control.”
2. This imperative also was recognized by the United Nations General Assembly (57/60) when it adopted 34 recommendations of the United Nations Experts Group Study on Disarmament and Non-Proliferation designed to promote education and training as “important but underutilized tools for promoting peace, disarmament and non-proliferation.”
3. Subsequently, the United Nations General Assembly has issued six biennial reports on the implementation of the Expert Group’s recommendations on the basis of submissions from member states, as well as international and nongovernmental organizations.
4. The issue of Disarmament and Non-Proliferation Education was discussed in the NPT Review Process for the first time in at the 2002 Preparatory Committee for the 2005 NPT Review Conference, and the subject appeared in an NPT Review Conference Document for the first time as Action 22 in the 2010 NPT Review Conference Final Document. It encouraged all States “to implement the recommendations contained in the report of the Secretary-General of the United Nations (A/57/124) regarding the United

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Nations study on disarmament and non-proliferation education, in order to advance the goals of the treaty in support of achieving a world without nuclear weapons.

5. To date, however, no more than ten states have submitted reports in any given year, and the number actually declined in the last cycle.

6. The 2013 Open Ended Working Group recognized the importance of Disarmament and Non-Proliferation Education, and devoted a panel to its discussion. Regrettably, the subject has not received comparable attention to date at the 2016 Open Ended Working Group.

7. We therefore, recommend that the 2016 Open Ended Working Group reserve time at one of its sessions for a focused discussion on concrete steps that can be taken to accelerate implementation of the recommendations of the United Nations Experts Group and to consider additional recommendations, including inter alia:

(a) Renewed emphasis in fostering critical thinking skills among youth, i.e., how to think, not what to think;

(b) Employment of simulations and other role playing techniques to promote greater empathy of the security concerns and threat perceptions of others;

(c) Provision of new training programs in the use of powerful “open source” tools and technologies such as geospatial imaging, 3D modelling, and big data analysis as means to empower individuals and countries in areas such as disarmament verification that previously were the domain of only a few States; and

(d) Identification of disarmament and non-proliferation education contact points in relevant national ministries in order to increase reporting on the implementation of the recommendations or the United Nations Experts Group as called for by United Nations General Assembly resolutions and the 2010 NPT Review Conference Final Document.
