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Open-ended Working Group taking forward multilateral nuclear disarmament negotiations¹

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Taking forward multilateral nuclear disarmament negotiations

Three measures to contribute to the achievement of a nuclear-weapon-free world

**Submitted by the Group of Non-Governmental Experts from countries
belonging to the New Agenda Coalition (NAC-NGO Group)²**

Introduction

1. The Group of Non-Governmental Experts from countries belonging to the New Agenda Coalition (NAC-NGO Group) welcomes the establishment of the Open-ended Working Group and encourages all governments to participate in good faith efforts to develop and adopt legal measures for the achievement of a nuclear-weapon-free world.
2. The NAC-NGO Group affirms the unconditional obligation of all States to negotiate for comprehensive nuclear disarmament, but recognises that there is currently insufficient political will amongst the nuclear-armed and other nuclear reliant States to achieve this.
3. In light of this situation, the NAC-NGO Group recommends three practical measures to contribute to the achievement of a nuclear-weapon-free world.

Launch a series of nuclear disarmament summits

4. On 5 April 2009, United States of America President Barack Obama speaking in Hradcany Square, Prague, put forward a vision, commitment and agenda to a nuclear-weapon-free world.


¹ Established pursuant to resolution 70/33 of the General Assembly of the United Nations.

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5. In 2010, as one of the initiatives to implement the Prague Agenda, the United States of America launched a series of Nuclear Security Summits.
6. The Nuclear Security Summits have been very successful in strengthening national measures and building cooperation on international measures to prevent nuclear terrorism.
7. In the final Nuclear Security Summit in Washington, 30 March – 1 April 2016, President Obama re-affirmed the Prague Agenda and in particular the commitment to achieve “the elimination of nuclear weapons from the face of the Earth.”
8. The NAC-NGO Group calls on the Open-ended Working Group to initiate a similar series of nuclear disarmament summits in order to elevate political attention, strengthen political will and foster international cooperation to achieve nuclear disarmament measures.
9. The NAC-NGO Group notes the growing international support for nuclear disarmament summits, as expressed in the United Nations Secretary-General’s Five-Point Proposal, parliamentary calls such as from Parliamentarians for Nuclear Non-proliferation and Disarmament, civil society calls such as from the Arms Control Association, and proposals in other working papers submitted to the Open-ended Working Group including the working paper submitted by the Middle Powers Initiative.

Establish additional nuclear-weapon-free zones, especially in the Middle East

10. Nuclear-weapon-free zones contribute to the achievement of a nuclear-weapon-free world by establishing regions where the threat, use, development, possession, testing and deployment of nuclear weapons is prohibited.
11. The prohibitions in nuclear-weapon-free zones are applicable to the States within the zone, and also to the nuclear-weapon-States who are invited to ratify additional protocols respecting the nuclear weapon prohibitions within the zones. These include security assurances not to threaten or use nuclear weapons against States parties to the zones.
12. As such, the zones strengthen legal norms and proscriptions against nuclear weapons both regionally and globally.
13. The zones also demonstrate the capacity for States to achieve security without reliance on nuclear weapons, and codify this commitment into legally binding measures.
14. Virtually all of the regions in nuclear-weapon-free zones, prior to the establishment of the zones, had nuclear weapons related activities (such as nuclear testing), States with nuclear weapons programmes, nuclear weapons deployed on territories, and/or States under extended-nuclear deterrence relationships. The establishment of the zones demonstrates the capacity for States to relinquish nuclear-weapons doctrines and activities in exchange for a nuclear disarmament regime based more on cooperative or common security.
15. Currently there are proposals for nuclear-weapon-free zones in the Middle East, North East Asia, Europe, the Arctic and the Baltic region. Establishing these as soon as possible would ultimately contribute to the achievement of a nuclear-weapon-free world in the foreseeable future.
16. The establishment of a Middle East zone free from nuclear weapons and other weapons of mass destruction should be given particular attention given its unanimous support in the United Nations General Assembly and the agreements of the 1995 NPT Review and Extension Conference and the 2000 and 2010 NPT Review Conferences supporting the establishment of such a zone.

17. The Open-ended Working Group should formally follow-up on the decision of the 2010 NPT Review Conference to invite the United Nations Secretary-General and the cosponsors of the 1995 Middle East resolution, in consultation with the States of the region, to convene a Conference in 2012 on the establishment of a Middle East zone free of nuclear weapons and all other weapons of mass destruction.

18. It was not possible to hold such a conference in 2012 due to various political obstacles. However, since 2012, a number of key measures regulating weapons of mass destruction in the Middle East have been achieved and implemented through national action, diplomacy, cooperation and political will. These include the agreement on elimination of Syria's chemical weapons, the adoption of the Comprehensive Plan of Action with regard to Iran and the implementation by various countries in the Middle East of national measures to secure nuclear and other weapons of mass destruction related materials and facilities.

19. In addition, in 2014 the United Nations Secretary-General received letters of support for a Middle East zone from Algeria, Bahrain, Comoros, Djibouti, Egypt, Iraq, Islamic Republic of Iran, Jordan, Kuwait, Lebanon, Libya, Mauritania, Morocco, Oman, Qatar, Saudi Arabia, Somalia, Sudan, Tunisia, United Arab Emirates and Yemen; and from the non-member observer State of Palestine.

20. These developments increase the confidence in the possibility of holding a United Nations conference on a Middle East zone, if sufficient political will is forthcoming. The Open-ended Working Group can contribute to this political will by calling on the United Nations General Assembly to hold a conference no later than 2019 on the establishment of a Middle East zone free of nuclear weapons and all other weapons of mass destruction.

Support nuclear disarmament education

21. Public awareness and understanding of the risks of nuclear weapons and the need for their prohibition and elimination are vital in order to build political will for achieving nuclear disarmament measures and to ensure sufficient support for their implementation.

22. The United Nations General Assembly in 2002 adopted the United Nations Study on Disarmament and Non-Proliferation Education which included a number of very useful recommendations to governments, civil society and international organizations.

23. These included recommendations to governments to establish advisory bodies; circulate disarmament education materials to educational institutions and media; use electronic media and innovative educational methods; establish peace cities, parks and museums; inform and engage academics, parliamentarians, religious communities, unions, youth and civil society in disarmament issues; include parliamentarians and non-governmental advisers to United Nations disarmament related meetings; establish disarmament and non-proliferation education programmes for primary, secondary and university students; and provide funding support for NGOs with expertise in disarmament education.

24. Governments should be encouraged to actively implement these recommendations.

25. Special emphasis should be given to funding support for NGOs with expertise in disarmament and non-proliferation education. Most of these organisations are working with voluntary staff and personal funding due to lack of government and donor community support. At the same time, governments are collectively spending \$1.7 trillion annually on military budgets (according to Trends in World Military Expenditures, Stockholm International Peace Research Institute, 2015), including approximately \$100 billion on nuclear weapons and their delivery systems.

Summary Recommendations

26. The Open-ended Working Group should:

- (a) Support the launch of a series of nuclear disarmament summits;
 - (b) Recommend that the United Nations General Assembly adopt a resolution at its seventy-first session deciding to hold, no later than 2019, a United Nations conference on establishing a Middle East zone free from nuclear weapons and other weapons of mass destruction;
 - (c) Recommend to governments to establish special funds to support disarmament and non-proliferation education and to allocate at least 0.05 per cent of their military budgets to these funds.
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