
Conference on Disarmament

9 September 2013

Original: English

Bangladesh on behalf of member States of G-21

Working paper

Method of work of the Conference on Disarmament and revitalization

1. The Group of 21 would like to stress, once again, that the Conference on Disarmament is the single multilateral disarmament negotiating forum mandated by the First Special Session of the General Assembly of the United Nations devoted to disarmament (SSOD I) and emphasize the importance of preserving it by strengthening the nature, role and purpose of this body. We must underscore the need to redouble our efforts in order to reinforce and revitalize the Conference on Disarmament and preserve its credibility through the resumption of substantive work including, inter alia, the negotiations on nuclear disarmament.
2. In the opinion of the overwhelming majority of both the international community and the membership of our Conference, the highest priority remains nuclear disarmament and the complete elimination of nuclear weapons. The Group of 21 reiterates its deep concern at the danger posed to the survival of humankind by the continued existence of nuclear weapons and of their possible use or threat of use. The Group, stressing its strong commitment to nuclear disarmament, underscores the urgent need to commence negotiations on this issue in the Conference on Disarmament, without further delay. As the highest priority, negotiations should start in the Conference on Disarmament on a phased programme for the complete elimination of nuclear weapons, including a nuclear-weapons convention prohibiting the possession, development, production, stockpiling, transfer and use of nuclear weapons, leading to the global, non-discriminatory and verifiable elimination of nuclear weapons, with a specified framework of time.
3. The Group reaffirms the absolute validity of multilateral diplomacy in the field of disarmament and non-proliferation, and expresses its determination to promote multilateralism as the core principle of negotiations in these areas. The Group welcomes the convening of a High Level Meeting of the General Assembly of the United Nations on nuclear disarmament that will be held in New York on 26 September 2013, as a concrete contribution to achieving the goal of nuclear disarmament. The Group encourages all States to actively participate in that important meeting at the highest level.
4. The Group reaffirms the importance of the multilateral disarmament machinery. It notes the ongoing work of the Open-ended Working Group mandated by the General

Assembly of the United Nations “to develop proposals to take forward multilateral nuclear disarmament negotiations for the achievement and maintenance of a world without nuclear weapons” and hopes that it would contribute towards nuclear disarmament negotiations in the Conference on Disarmament.

5. The Group reaffirms that the total elimination of nuclear weapons is the only absolute guarantee against the use or threat of use of nuclear weapons. Pending the achievement of the complete elimination of such weapons, the Group reaffirms the urgent need for the conclusion of a universal, unconditional and legally binding instrument to effectively assure non-nuclear-weapon States against the use or threat of use of nuclear weapons as a matter of high priority. The Group expresses concern that despite the commitment of the nuclear weapon States and long standing requests by non-nuclear-weapon States to receive such legally binding assurances, no tangible progress has been achieved in this regard. It is a matter of more concern that non-nuclear-weapon States implicitly or explicitly have been subject to nuclear threats by some nuclear weapon States contrary to their obligations under the Charter of the United Nations.

6. The Group of 21 therefore expresses its disappointment that the Conference has not been able to undertake substantive work on its agenda. The group takes note of various efforts to reach consensus on the programme of work of the Conference on Disarmament including the programme of work adopted on 29 May 2009 that was not implemented and all subsequent efforts and proposals for a programme of work, including those tabled on 14 March 2012 and 11 February 2013 that were not adopted.

7. The Group reiterates the urgency that the Conference on Disarmament should adopt and implement a balanced and comprehensive programme of work on the basis of its agenda, while taking into account the security interests of all States and dealing with, *inter alia*, the core issues, including nuclear disarmament, in accordance with the rules of procedure.

8. The Group furthermore believes that promoting the work of the disarmament machinery of the United Nations hinges on a suitable political environment, taking into account the collective security interests of all States.

9. While expressing its deep concern over the persistent lack of consensus on the implementation of the multilateral disarmament agenda in the disarmament machinery of the United Nations, particularly in fulfilling the commitments on nuclear disarmament as the highest priority, the Group reaffirms its support for an early convening of the Fourth Special Session of the General Assembly of the United Nations devoted to disarmament (SSOD IV) and expresses its deep concern, over the fact that SSOD IV is yet to be convened.

10. The Group of 21 reiterates the importance of the establishment in the Middle East of a zone free of nuclear and all other weapons of mass destruction and deeply regrets the delay of concrete action to that end.

11. The Group recognizes the importance of continuing consultations on the question of the possibility of expansion of the membership of the Conference on Disarmament.

12. The Group also continues to support strengthening the interaction of the Conference on Disarmament with civil society in the field of disarmament, particularly nuclear disarmament, in keeping with the nature of the Conference on Disarmament as a negotiating forum.

13. The Group of 21 recognizes the on-going need for the United Nations to have an independent, impartial and objective research capacity on issues related to disarmament, with priority given to nuclear disarmament. In this regard, we believe that United Nations Institute for Disarmament Research (UNIDIR) should realize its potential, especially given

that it finds its roots in SSOD I. It is important to maintain UNIDIR's autonomy and impartiality in fulfilling its role of providing in-depth and long-term research on disarmament issues.
