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Open-ended Working Group to develop proposals to take forward multilateral nuclear disarmament negotiations for the achievement and maintenance of a world without nuclear weapons

Geneva 2013

Item 5 of the agenda

Develop proposals to take forward multilateral nuclear disarmament negotiations for the achievement and maintenance of a world without nuclear weapons

Summary¹

Discussions by the Moderator² of Panel VII entitled “roles and responsibilities for nuclear disarmament”

Submitted by the Chairperson

1. The Moderator had the privilege of moderating the panel on the roles and responsibilities for nuclear disarmament. The Group heard a very interesting and comprehensive presentation by Mr. Tarik Rauf, who developed the differences and commonalities between the various State actors involved in the disarmament process.
2. Mr. Rauf shared a detailed analysis on the responsibilities of the five Non-Proliferation Treaty (NPT) nuclear-weapon States (NWS). He spoke on the role that the two major nuclear-weapon possessors are expected to play. He also dwelled upon the case of the NWS outside the NPT, and he gave specific numbers and figures regarding the modernization of nuclear arsenals being undertaken by the nine nuclear-weapon possessors. He then referred to the role that can be played by the States who benefit from extended nuclear deterrence. And he talked about the role of the non-nuclear weapon states (NNWS) under the NPT and/or nuclear-weapon-free zone (NWFZ) treaties.
3. Throughout his presentation, Mr. Tarik Rauf provided a historical perspective and compared the different roles and responsibilities of each one of those groups of States in

¹ These reflections are offered in a personal capacity and have no official status.

² Mr. Antonio Guerreiro, Ambassador and Permanent Representative of Brazil to the Conference on Disarmament.

various frameworks, such as the NPT, the Security Council of the United Nations, the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty, the Fissile Material Cut-off Treaty (FMCT), NWFZ treaties, comprehensive safeguard agreements, negative security assurances, humanitarian dimension, etc.

4. The Group then had a very interesting debate on the concept of shared responsibilities. The panellist clarified the difference between that concept and the one of equal responsibilities. In effect, although NWS and NNWS shoulder the shared responsibility for achieving a world without nuclear weapons, it cannot be denied that they have different roles and responsibilities to realize this objective.

5. The Group also had an interesting exchange of views on the initiatives NNWS could take to help moving the multilateral disarmament negotiations forward. Mr. Rauf was a strong advocate of a global nuclear disarmament summit, which would raise the level of the debate, and help foster commitments on disarmament and put them at the same level of those that currently exist for non-proliferation. The panellist also acknowledged the potential the humanitarian dimension discussion can take and also encouraged NNWS to contribute to further delegitimizing and devaluing nuclear weapons.

6. As mentioned in the Moderator's introductory remarks to the panel, this Group is not meant to shape the discussion as a battle of "us against them". In fact, many commented on the need to find common ground so as to bridge the gaps and achieve nuclear disarmament. The Moderator believes that the discussion on the common, but different, responsibilities of NNWS and NWS was useful towards this end.
