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Nuclear disarmament verification

Report of the Secretary-General

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* [A/75/50](#).



I. Introduction

1. In paragraph 2 of its resolution [74/50](#) on nuclear disarmament verification, the General Assembly requested the Secretary-General to seek the substantive views of Member States on the report of the Group of Governmental Experts to consider the role of verification in nuclear disarmament verification ([A/74/90](#)) and to report back to the General Assembly at its seventy-fifth session.

2. Pursuant to that resolution, on 3 February 2020, the Office for Disarmament Affairs sent a note verbale to all Member States requesting their views by 15 May 2020, followed by a revised note verbale dated 4 May extending the deadline for submission to 31 May 2020. The replies received as at 31 May 2020 are contained in section II. The reply of the European Union is reproduced in section III, in accordance with the modalities set out in resolution [65/276](#). Additional replies received after 31 May will be posted on the website of the Office for Disarmament Affairs in the language of submission only.¹

II. Replies received from Governments

Australia

[Original: English]
[18 May 2020]

Australia welcomes the opportunity to make the following submission on the report of the Group of Governmental Experts to consider the role of verification in advancing nuclear disarmament established pursuant to paragraph 7 of General Assembly resolution [71/67](#). Australia was a strong supporter of the resolution establishing the Group of Governmental Experts and welcomed its consensus report.

Consistent with our view that verification is critical in the process of disarmament, Australia has made substantive contributions to work in this field, including through the International Partnership for Nuclear Disarmament Verification, where Australia has successfully co-chaired working groups on on-site inspections and verification of nuclear weapons reductions. Australia believes that it is important to engage a wider number of United Nations Member States on the challenges involved in work on nuclear disarmament verification.

Australia regrets that the plenary session we had announced to consider the report of the Group of Governmental Experts during our presidency of the Conference on Disarmament in 2020 could not proceed owing to coronavirus disease (COVID-19) restrictions. As coordinator of the Non-Proliferation and Disarmament Initiative, we also highlight the Initiative's joint ministerial statement of 23 November 2019 undertaking to "promote tangible measures to enhance nuclear disarmament verification".

On the substance of the Group of Governmental Experts report itself, Australia would like to make the following points:

- We agree with the Group's observations in paragraphs 6 and 13 of the report on the importance of effective verification for building trust and confidence in disarmament.
- On the question of the engagement of non-nuclear-weapon States in verification activities as raised in paragraphs 7, 8, 23 and 25 of the report, Australia considers that the work of the International Partnership for Nuclear Disarmament

¹ <https://meetings.unoda.org/section/gge-ndv-sgreport/>.

Verification demonstrates the important contributions that non-nuclear-weapon States can make, as well as the value of building expert capacity on verification. At the same time, Australia recognizes the issues raised in paragraph 30 of the report in regard to sovereignty, security, safety, and proliferation-related concerns.

- We consider that the report should have emphasized that effective verification will require diverse, inclusive participation in all aspects from women and men.
- Australia would value the opportunity to further explore any of the proposals identified in paragraph 14 of the report, as well as any new proposals.
- Australia supports the principles of verification identified by the Group of Governmental Experts in paragraph 38 of the report, based on international law and the principles laid out in the final document of the first special session devoted to disarmament and the United Nations Disarmament Commission principles of verification, and particularly notes the value of the principles related to clarity of and compliance with nuclear disarmament provisions.
- Australia supports the conclusions reached by the Group of Governmental Experts in paragraph 39 of the report, and would like to underline the critical importance of the second conclusion that “verification is essential in the process of nuclear disarmament and to achieving a world without nuclear weapons”.
- Australia strongly supports the recommendations reached by the Group of Governmental Experts in paragraph 40 of the report, including that further work based on the Group of Governmental Experts report take place.

Canada

[Original: English/French]

[29 May 2020]

The present submission provides Canada’s views on the report of the Group of Governmental Experts to consider the role of verification in advancing nuclear disarmament, welcomed by paragraph 1 of resolution [74/50](#) entitled “nuclear disarmament verification”. The present submission follows the receipt of a note verbale from the Office for Disarmament Affairs, pursuant to paragraph 2 of the above-mentioned resolution, requesting that the Secretary-General seek the substantive views of Member States on the report.

Canada supports the adoption of the report and its conclusions, and looks forward to the substantive work of the next Group of Governmental Experts on nuclear disarmament verification, established pursuant to resolution [74/50](#), set to begin in 2021.

International security and nuclear disarmament verification

The international security landscape is becoming more complex and unstable. As expressed in paragraph 6 of the report, this has led to differing views on whether the current international security environment is conducive to progress on nuclear disarmament. Canada believes that it is during these times that the international community must redouble its efforts on nuclear disarmament. Canada encourages discussions among nuclear-weapon States, such as the P5 process, and welcomes all initiatives that seek to make concrete advancements on nuclear disarmament, including on effective verification.

Nuclear disarmament verification is an effective measure to ensure compliance with disarmament commitments. Canada agrees that the documents on verification

principles listed in paragraph 38 of the report provide the foundation for nuclear disarmament verification work. The principles articulated by the Disarmament Commission in 1988, to which Canada is pleased to have contributed, and by the final document of the first special session devoted to disarmament (1978), include, but are not limited to: promoting confidence-building; using different techniques of verification; guaranteeing the absence of interference in the methods, procedures and techniques used; ensuring the absence of deliberate concealment; safeguarding equal rights by all States party to an agreement to participate in the process of verification; and covering all relevant weapons, facilities, locations, installations and activities.

Considerations on possible next steps

General considerations on verification. Canada appreciates the broader discussions by the Governmental Group of Experts on possible linkages between nuclear disarmament verification and verification methods used for existing bilateral and multilateral agreements, such as the Strategic Arms Reduction Treaty (New START) and the Convention on the Prohibition of the Development, Production, Stockpiling and Use of Chemical Weapons and on Their Destruction (Chemical Weapons Convention). Given the importance of building on best practices and lessons learned, Canada would welcome further discussion by the next Governmental Group of Experts of these possible linkages. In addition, Canada believes that the nuclear disarmament verification field would benefit from further analysis and consideration by the next Governmental Group of Experts of the impact of disposal and dismantlement of nuclear weapons on the environment and human health, and the development of processes and technologies to manage these risks.

Confidence-building measures. Canada recognizes the importance of disarmament verification to international peace and security, including for assuring confidence in international security agreements. Canada believes that, by providing assurances that parties are complying with their obligations, robust verification mechanisms enhance credibility, promote transparency and accountability, and build confidence among participating States. In relation to paragraph 19 of the report, Canada agrees that, when there is political will to reach a treaty and carry out obligations, verification tends to be more effective. Canada also believes that, in addition to political will, expert-level interactions are critical to making tangible advancements in this field. For example, Canada is proud to be a member of the International Partnership for Nuclear Disarmament Verification, which not only builds capacity, but also trust among nuclear-weapon States and non-nuclear weapon States by establishing networks of experts and policymakers, thus creating a culture of cooperation and mutual confidence.

Building on existing expertise. Canada sees great value in drawing from the experiences of and expertise that has been developed by ongoing nuclear disarmament verification initiatives, and by international organizations working in the nuclear field, to make further progress on nuclear disarmament verification. Canada believes that, based on the expertise, mandate and existing commitments of the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA), a possible role for IAEA in nuclear disarmament verification could be considered in the safeguarding of weapon-usable material. Canada also thinks that the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty verification regime, which includes the International Monitoring System, offers a positive multilateral experience for future discussions on nuclear disarmament verification. In this regard, Canada welcomes the fact that the Governmental Group of Experts received separate briefings on technical elements of the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty and the IAEA safeguards. In addition, Canada welcomes the presentations made to the Governmental Group of Experts on current initiatives such as the International Partnership for Nuclear Disarmament Verification, the Quad Nuclear

Verification Partnership and the UK-Norway Initiative. Canada strongly believes that these expert-level initiatives are helping to build technical and practical expertise in the field.

Importance of engagement by all States. Because nuclear weapons are a global concern, Canada believes that discussions on their dismantlement and elimination should include all States, be they nuclear weapon possessors or non-nuclear weapon possessors. Canada acknowledges that effective nuclear disarmament verification must take into account a number of legitimate concerns, such as concerns around proliferation. Canada believes that such concerns can be managed and notes that current nuclear disarmament verification initiatives are exploring ways to mitigate these risks. In this regard, Canada calls on all States to initiate or deepen their engagement with nuclear disarmament verification initiatives, and, specifically, calls on Russia and China to re-engage in the International Partnership for Nuclear Disarmament Verification. Furthermore, Canada recognizes that the capacity of States to engage in nuclear disarmament verification varies, and that, as expressed in paragraph 25 of the report, there are opportunities to further develop these capacities. Canada continues to support capacity-building through the Partnership, and is open to exploring other ways to enhance capacity-building, such as expanding the membership of the Partnership and other engagements with States on nuclear disarmament verification. Canada welcomes additional exploration by the next Governmental Group of Experts of effective ways to facilitate capacity-building, including, but not limited to, further development of the concepts of a Group of Scientific and Technical Experts and of a nuclear disarmament verification capacity-building fund.

Diversity as a strength. As a champion of the full, meaningful and equal participation of women in all aspects of disarmament, Canada welcomes the emphasis on gender parity and equitable geographical representation in the next Governmental Group of Experts, in line with paragraph 6 of resolution 74/50. Canada strongly believes that the next Governmental Group of Experts will benefit from the approaches and perspectives that will be brought to the table by a diverse and inclusive group of experts.

Canada's efforts in nuclear disarmament verification

Canada appreciates the consideration by the Governmental Group of Experts of the work of the International Partnership for Nuclear Disarmament Verification, an initiative established in 2014. The Partnership aims to address technical challenges associated with nuclear disarmament verification, and currently involves more than 25 partners. Canada's expert-level participation in the Partnership, as well as its most recent contribution of CAD\$1.2 million to the Partnership's secretariat, demonstrate Canada's continued commitment in this field. Canada is also honoured to have hosted the Partnership's plenary meeting in Ottawa in December 2019, which included technical demonstrations at the Canadian Nuclear Laboratories facilities in Chalk River, Ontario.

Canada continues to be a staunch promoter of nuclear disarmament verification, including as an active member of the Non-Proliferation and Disarmament Initiative, and of the Stockholm initiative on nuclear disarmament. On the latter, on 25 February 2020, the Stockholm initiative issued a ministerial statement which included support for ongoing initiatives on developing multilateral nuclear disarmament verification capacities, such as the International Partnership for Nuclear Disarmament Verification and efforts within the United Nations system. Furthermore, Canada has consistently supported and co-sponsored General Assembly resolutions on nuclear disarmament verification, including the latest resolution 74/50, which, inter alia, established the second Governmental Group of Experts on nuclear disarmament verification.

China

[Original: Chinese]

[30 April 2020]

Pursuant to the relevant requirements of General Assembly resolution 74/50, entitled “Nuclear disarmament verification”, the Government of China presents herewith the following views on the issue of nuclear disarmament verification:

I. Effective nuclear disarmament verification measures help to enhance the credibility of compliance with nuclear disarmament treaties and to strengthen mutual trust among contracting parties. They serve as important safeguards for the complete prohibition and thorough destruction of nuclear weapons.

Engaging in communication on the issue of nuclear disarmament verification will facilitate the development of mutual trust among nuclear-weapon States, as well as between nuclear-weapon and non-nuclear-weapon States. It will also facilitate the provision of technical support for the future development of the international nuclear disarmament process.

The first Group of Governmental Experts to consider the role of verification in advancing nuclear disarmament, established by the United Nations and which functioned from 2018 to 2019, had discussed the content, principles, methods and functions of nuclear disarmament verification. The discussions deepened the understanding of the international community on this issue and provided a good basis for further discussion on the issue in the future.

China supports the assumption of a leading role by the United Nations in international discussions on nuclear disarmament verification and believes that this will help to enhance the authority, representation and influence of the discussions and deepen the international nuclear disarmament process.

Existing verification measures play an important role in ensuring the compliance of contracting parties with their obligations under nuclear disarmament and nuclear non-proliferation treaties. The continuous, large-scale and substantial reduction in nuclear arsenals by the countries with the largest number of them, in a verifiable and irreversible manner, is of critical and decisive significance to the future development of the nuclear disarmament process. Their verification technologies and experience also provide an important reference for the international discussions on nuclear disarmament verification. In the future, international legal instruments relating to nuclear disarmament should, to the greatest extent possible, include corresponding verification mechanisms.

II. China believes that the international community, in promoting research relating to nuclear disarmament verification, should adhere to the following principles:

(1) Principle of balance. Given that nuclear disarmament verification involves sensitive information relating to nuclear weapons, which is strictly protected by nuclear-weapon States as top secret, any leakage of such information will cause irreparable damage to the national security of the inspected party. Therefore, nuclear disarmament verification must strike a balance between credibility and the protection of sensitive information.

(2) Principle of non-proliferation. Information on nuclear weapons is held by only a small number of nuclear-weapon States. Nuclear disarmament verification inevitably involves such information and may create a risk of nuclear proliferation, which, in turn, poses a challenge to international security. Nuclear disarmament verification arrangements should take such risks into full consideration and take strict preventive measures to avoid causing nuclear proliferation.

(3) Principle of step-by-step progress. Nuclear disarmament verification, which involves the means of delivery, nuclear warheads, nuclear materials and other aspects of nuclear weapons, is highly complex, with various known and unknown difficulties. Relevant research should address the simplest issues first and move forward in a sequential manner rather than aiming at a single-step solution.

(4) Principle of linking to specific nuclear disarmament treaties. There are differences in the verification requirements of the various nuclear disarmament treaties. No substantive progress can be made by formulating verification measures that are not tied to specific treaties. We should not seek to establish a unified verification template that is universally applicable. Specific verification measures should be negotiated by the negotiating parties to treaties. International discussions on nuclear disarmament verification should not affect future negotiations on nuclear disarmament.

(5) Principle of non-discrimination. Nuclear disarmament verification capabilities are closely related to a country's overall strength, including its scientific and technological capacity. Specific measures for nuclear disarmament verification must be negotiated and implemented by consensus among all negotiating parties, to avoid discrimination based on objective differences in technological capacity and to ensure that verification is conducted in an equitable manner.

III. China is actively engaged in research into nuclear disarmament verification technologies and in academic exchanges and cooperation with many countries. China participated constructively in the work of the United Nations Group of Governmental Experts on nuclear disarmament verification from 2018 to 2019 and played a positive role in the Group's achievements. China will continue to focus on research into nuclear disarmament verification technologies and participate actively in related international cooperation.

Cuba

[Original: Spanish]
[20 April 2020]

Total prohibition and elimination is the only absolute guarantee against the use or threat of use of nuclear weapons. The process of nuclear disarmament, to be effective, must meet the criteria of transparency and irreversibility and be carried out under strict international verification.

The need for a strict and effective international control or verification system for nuclear disarmament was endorsed both in the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons and in the 1996 advisory opinion of the International Court of Justice on the legality of the threat or use of nuclear weapons.

“The principle of increased and undiminished security for all” as a basis for nuclear disarmament, as contained in General Assembly resolution [71/67](#), cannot be used as a pretext to legitimize the existence of nuclear weapons or to postpone indefinitely their prohibition and elimination. Any argument for delaying disarmament negotiations on the basis of the international context and the need for a “stable” security environment contravenes article VI of the Treaty, violates the binding nature of those provisions and undermines the credibility of the Treaty.

Non-nuclear-weapon States have demonstrated their commitment to a world free of nuclear weapons by limiting their use of nuclear energy to peaceful activities exclusively. Future verification of nuclear disarmament must involve all States, particularly those that possess nuclear weapons; it must be respectful of the sovereignty and national interests of States, and also be conducted in an impartial,

objective and transparent manner, without double standards or manipulation for political ends.

The International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) can play an important role in the verification of nuclear disarmament. IAEA has the capacity, knowledge and specialized staff to carry out verification activities in accordance with the purposes and principles of the Charter of the United Nations, thereby contributing to the advancement of nuclear disarmament.

Although the current structure of IAEA serves the purpose of verifying non-nuclear-weapon States' compliance with their obligations under the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons, IAEA has a role in nuclear disarmament that includes the application of safeguards on nuclear material derived from the dismantlement of nuclear weapons.

The establishment or creation of new capabilities for IAEA, to enable it to address future challenges in disarmament-related verification, would also be linked to capacity-building for IAEA member States, as an essential complement to such a policy.

Egypt

[Original: English]
[17 May 2020]

Egypt appreciates the efforts of the Group of Governmental Experts on Nuclear Disarmament Verification in producing the report contained in document [A/74/90](#). Egypt takes note of the report and wishes to make the following remarks and observations:

1. The report does not place the necessary emphasis on the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons and the legally binding obligations under article VI of the Treaty.

2. Instead, the report states that there are no treaty-based obligations on nuclear disarmament and stresses in several paragraphs (e.g., paras. 20 and 28) that negotiating and concluding new treaties are necessary for verifiable nuclear disarmament to advance. For example, the report states that “The Group noted the impracticability of setting out prescriptions for a nuclear disarmament verification regime in the absence of treaty negotiations”.

3. In this context, Egypt would like to underscore that article VI of the Non-Proliferation Treaty refers to “effective measures” on nuclear disarmament rather than the conclusion of further treaties on nuclear disarmament verification.

4. Moreover, in paragraph 6) of the report, the Group of Governmental Experts questions “whether the current security environment is conducive to progress in nuclear disarmament”. This reference goes beyond the mandate of the Group, which was tasked with discussing nuclear disarmament verification, not with making judgments on whether the security conditions are conducive to nuclear disarmament or not.

5. The emphasis on the need for a Group of Technical and Scientific Experts, or the need for capacity-building for non-nuclear-weapon States, undermines the wealth of knowledge and expertise available through decades of safeguards and verification undertaken within the framework of the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) and other prominent bilateral agreements and unilateral experiences. The comparison with the 20-year work of the Group of Scientific Experts on the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty verification regime misses the key difference between verifying that fissile material is not being diverted to

weaponization activities versus verifying the occurrence of a nuclear test explosion, on which the international community knew very little in the 1970s.

6. The historic experiences of South Africa, the ex-Soviet Union Republics, and several unilateral and bilateral reductions under the Non-Proliferation Treaty or the START agreement prove beyond doubt that verifiable nuclear disarmament can be conducted and achieved without further treaties or multilaterally agreed arrangements on nuclear disarmament verification.

7. The approach of the report of the Group of Governmental Experts undermines the role of the IAEA Safeguards System and the fact that in article III B.1 of the Statute of IAEA explicitly tasked the agency is explicitly tasked with “furthering the establishment of safeguarded worldwide disarmament”.

8. The Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons has set a minimum requirement for adhering to it that relies on the IAEA comprehensive safeguards agreement. The report of the High-Level Group of Governmental Experts on the Fissile Material Cut-off Treaty included tasking IAEA with safeguarding fissile material designated as no longer used in military programmes as an option for the verification of a possible fissile material cut-off treaty.

9. Therefore, the report implies that the lack of progress on the implementation of nuclear disarmament obligations is mainly due to the lack of technical expertise and/or multilateral agreements on verification. This, in itself, could add a new artificial obstacle against moving forward on nuclear disarmament and implementing the relevant binding obligations and commitments. The impediments to nuclear disarmament are political rather than technical.

10. Furthermore, the report implies that, should the goal of the total elimination of nuclear weapons be achieved, there would be a two-tier discriminatory verification regime in which the non-nuclear-weapon States abide by the IAEA Safeguards System while the nuclear-weapon States are subject to a different regime.

11. Egypt fully supports efforts that aim at strengthening the capabilities and knowledge of the international community on the technical aspects of verifiable and irreversible nuclear disarmament. Nevertheless, these efforts should focus on providing guidance on the possible pace at which the dismantlement of nuclear arsenals can occur once a political decision is taken by a nuclear-weapon State, and the time frame that is needed for the fissile material previously used for weaponization purposes to be either eliminated or placed under international safeguards. The modalities for nuclear disarmament verification should place more emphasis on placing the fissile material under safeguards as opposed to overseeing the actual process of dismantling the warheads that contain such material.

12. To conclude, Egypt believes that, while further work on nuclear disarmament verification is important and useful, it should not be at the expense of the level of commitment to the Non-Proliferation Treaty and the objective of nuclear disarmament itself by adding further artificial impediments to the implementation of the relevant obligations and commitments.

Hungary

[Original: English]
[4 May 2020]

General observations on multilateral nuclear disarmament and its verification

Hungary is fully committed to the ultimate goal of achieving and maintaining a world free of nuclear weapons through complete, irreversible and verifiable

disarmament in accordance with article VI of the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons.

While verification is not a goal in itself, effective and adequate verification is fundamental to provide assurance of compliance with treaty obligations throughout the nuclear disarmament process covering all stages of the life cycle of nuclear weapons.

Nuclear- and non-nuclear-weapon States should work together on multilateral nuclear disarmament verification, in conformity with their Non-Proliferation Treaty obligations. Non-nuclear-weapon States, based on their experience in other verification activities and in civilian nuclear applications, can make an important contribution without acquiring proliferation-sensitive information. Their involvement also enhances transparency and increases confidence between nuclear-weapon States and non-nuclear-weapon States.

Report of the Group of Governmental Experts to consider the role of verification in advancing nuclear disarmament

Hungary welcomes that the group of governmental experts established pursuant to General Assembly resolution [71/67](#) that brought together governmental experts from nuclear- and non-nuclear-weapon States, was able to adopt its report, including possible points of convergence, conclusions and recommendations, by consensus. Hungary attaches particular importance to the following views reflected in the report:

- Although verification measures will be determined on a case-by-case basis by the parties to specific legally binding documents, there are general verification elements that are applicable to any future nuclear disarmament treaty.
- Multiple verification measures should be strictly in line with existing non-proliferation obligations and balanced with the legitimate sovereignty-, security- and safety-related interests of States parties, as well as the need to protect otherwise sensitive information.
- Since all States have equal rights to participate in multilateral nuclear disarmament verification, it should be inclusive and non-discriminatory, with the recognition that there are common but different obligations and responsibilities.

Hungary also welcomes that the Group of Governmental Experts, drawing on the outcome of work carried out earlier in the United Nations system, could agree on and suggest indicative and non-exhaustive principles for the role of verification in advancing nuclear disarmament.

One of the important objectives of the Group of Governmental Experts was to review and integrate into the United Nations system all relevant information regarding nuclear disarmament and its verification. As reflected in the Chair's summary, presentations on verification regimes linked to bilateral treaties and multilateral conventions, as well as on recent and ongoing initiatives, contributed to the informed discussion on possible lessons and common denominators that may be applicable for nuclear disarmament verification.

The Group of Governmental Experts to be established pursuant to General Assembly resolution [74/50](#)

Hungary co-sponsored General Assembly resolution [74/50](#), requesting the Secretary-General to establish a new Group of Governmental Experts in order to further consider nuclear disarmament verification issues, including, inter alia, the concept of a Group of Scientific and Technical Experts, because there is a need for a

continued examination of the issue in all its aspects, building on the report of the first Group of Governmental Experts and the substantive views of Member States.

The new Group of Governmental Experts should examine, inter alia, the placement of the Group of Scientific and Technical Experts within the international disarmament machinery, its mandate, size and composition, as well as the applicable rules of procedure. The Group should also deliberate conceptual issues such as the definition, objective and scope of nuclear disarmament verification, possible verification measures, tools and methodologies, as well as institutional set-up, governance, legal arrangements and financing.

Continuous capacity-building, including human resources and technical capabilities is an indispensable component of strengthening the multilateral nuclear disarmament verification process by enabling the involvement of more States from all regions. Therefore, the new Group of Governmental Experts should continue discussing proposals put forward in the first Group of Governmental Experts on capacity-building.

Since a qualitative and quantitative multilateral capacity-building framework requires considerable resources, the Group of Governmental Experts should also further examine the suggestion to establish a nuclear disarmament verification trust fund, aimed at providing adequate funding to promote inclusive engagement in multilateral nuclear disarmament verification.

India

[Original: English]
[27 May 2020]

India's views on nuclear disarmament verification should be read in conjunction with its views contained in the report of the Secretary-General on nuclear disarmament verification (A/72/304). India actively participated in the Group of Governmental Experts established pursuant to General Assembly resolution 71/67, to consider the role of verification in advancing nuclear disarmament, which India had voted in favour of. India has welcomed the report of the Group of Governmental Experts (A/74/90), which was adopted by consensus. The report has a number of important conclusions and recommendations, including the need for further work related to the role of verification in advancing nuclear disarmament. It is in this context, that India supported General Assembly resolution 74/50, in which the Assembly requests the establishment of a Group of Governmental Experts to further consider nuclear disarmament verification. India believes that this would lead to enhancing our common understanding of various aspects of nuclear disarmament verification, which could serve as an essential element of a comprehensive nuclear weapon convention. Our future work should build upon the report of the Group of Governmental Experts (A/74/90), past work conducted by the Disarmament Commission on the subject of verification, and in accordance with the principles enshrined in the final document of the tenth special session of the General Assembly (special session of the General Assembly devoted to disarmament).

In resolution 74/50, the General Assembly encourages the Conference on Disarmament and the Disarmament Commission to address nuclear disarmament verification. It is India's considered view that a substantive consideration of this issue should be in the context of the negotiation of a nuclear weapons convention prohibiting the development, production, stockpiling and use of nuclear weapons and on their destruction, leading to the global, non-discriminatory and verifiable elimination of nuclear weapons with a specified time frame. Technical work to be conducted by the Group of Governmental Experts could be useful in this regard.

International and effective verification is also an important aspect of the agreed mandate for a future treaty banning the production of fissile material for nuclear weapons or other nuclear explosive devices and the further work by the Group of Governmental Experts on Nuclear Disarmament Verification may also contribute to our enhanced understanding with regard to a fissile material cut-off treaty.

India stands ready to participate in future discussions on this issue and contribute to the work by the Group of Governmental Experts, the Conference on Disarmament and the Disarmament Commission.

Indonesia

[Original: English]

[31 May 2020]

Indonesia shares the common understanding that the very presence of nuclear weapons is indeed among the serious threats to our existence in this world. Thus, the idea of general and complete nuclear weapons disarmament is the sole assurance to avoid global calamities and grave humanitarian impact.

One of the crucial elements in achieving the aforesaid goal has been the main aim of the establishment of the Group of Governmental Experts to consider the role of verification in advancing nuclear disarmament as mandated by General Assembly resolution [71/67](#). Indonesia, as part of the Group of Governmental Experts process, also welcomes the adoption by consensus of the report of the Group in 2019.

Assurance in nuclear disarmament progress is a bond underlined by broad credibility. The current exclusive nuclear disarmament verification mechanism has been noted to have major limitations, among others the lack of global credibility, and that it is prone to political uncertainty within the exclusive parties involved. It is important that the credibility should be widely accepted and with the intention to build symmetrical confidence among all stakeholders in the progress of nuclear disarmament. We believe that such credibility will only be attainable through a feasible, efficient and inclusive nuclear disarmament verification regime.

The main challenges to the proposed credible and non-discriminatory multilateral nuclear disarmament verification regime lies in the capacity gap between the nuclear weapons' possessor and the non-possessor States as a result of existing exclusive nuclear disarmament verification measures. This issue can be addressed by emphasizing the importance of capacity-building for all the committed non-nuclear-weapon States supported by the nuclear disarmament verification fund (NDV Trust Fund) which was proposed by Indonesia, the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland, and Norway during the Group of Governmental Experts on nuclear disarmament verification. The aim of the intended capacity-building is the availability of a ready-to-use pool of talents from wider regions, thus improving the inclusivity of the multilateral nuclear disarmament verification regime.

The inclusive multilateral nuclear disarmament verification regime should ideally be developed from an existing and capable international organization in the matter of nuclear safeguards and disarmament, in this regard within the framework of the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA). The Agency is clearly specifically mandated to conduct its activities in furthering the establishment of safeguarded worldwide disarmament and has a track record of operational credibility for over six decades in addressing evolving nuclear proliferation risks and strengthening global safeguards regime since its establishment in 1957.

Article III of the Non-Proliferation Treaty should also provide the assurances on the question of sensitive information leakage, as well as proliferation risk. The

latter facts should be a sound basis for consideration in developing future inclusive nuclear disarmament verification measures with the involvement of IAEA. Moreover, IAEA can also address any efficiency and human resource issues by avoiding the duplication of nuclear disarmament verification measures through the establishment of new institutions.

Indonesia also welcomes a recommendation on forming the Group of Scientific and Technical Experts in the future. The Group can learn from the success of the Group of Scientific Experts in building a culture of verification and international technical cooperation that led to mutual confidence in the verification solutions developed and tested by the group through the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty Organization. Moreover, the progress of the nuclear disarmament agenda is highly dependent on and must be propelled under strong political will from all States, thus we encourage the future works of this Group to be done under a hybrid approach which involves scientists and political experts.

Indonesia encourages further work on nuclear disarmament verification, taking into account the report of the previous Group of Governmental Experts.

Japan

[Original: English]
[31 May 2020]

Development and strengthening of practical and effective nuclear disarmament verification measures

Japan has maintained a realistic and practical approach to promoting nuclear disarmament and underlines the importance of studying potential verification measures and activities, as well as developing tools and technologies for verification in the nuclear disarmament process. This will facilitate medium- and long-term efforts to achieve a world free of nuclear weapons.

Japan, as a non-nuclear-weapon State, has amassed highly advanced knowledge and technologies through its considerable experience with safeguards for the peaceful uses of nuclear energy, as well as on-site inspections under the Convention on the Prohibition of the Development, Production, Stockpiling and Use of and on Their Destruction (Chemical Weapons Convention). This experience and knowledge can contribute to discussions on nuclear disarmament verification.

Based on the above-mentioned expertise, Japan has actively contributed to discussions on verification technologies as well as operating procedures for on-site inspections in the International Partnership for Nuclear Disarmament Verification, in which both nuclear-weapon States and non-nuclear-weapon States work together to explore solutions to complex challenges involved in the verification of nuclear disarmament. Japan also sent an expert to the Group of Governmental Experts on Nuclear Disarmament Verification, mandated in resolution [71/67](#).

In order to achieve a world free of nuclear weapons, a robust and reliable international verification regime must be established with engagement by both nuclear-weapon States and non-nuclear-weapon States. In this regard, the said Group of Governmental Experts presented itself as a valuable role model for cooperative work of both nuclear-weapon States and non-nuclear-weapon States. Japan greatly appreciates that members of the Group with various views with regard to effective and credible nuclear disarmament verification could agree on the report by consensus.

The following factors, among others, should be taken into account in studying and developing practical and effective measures on nuclear disarmament verification:

- (a) Verification must be effective, and must provide sufficient confidence and transparency to relevant parties to an agreement that other parties are complying with their obligations;
- (b) Verification mechanisms must prevent the transfer of proliferation-sensitive information, including design information and manufacturing techniques related to nuclear weapons or other explosive devices;
- (c) Verification mechanisms must ensure the safety of personnel, such as inspectors, carrying out verification activities. They must also ensure the security of items to be verified, such as nuclear materials and related facilities, which may be targeted by criminal activity;
- (d) Verification mechanisms must contribute to confidence-building;
- (e) Verification mechanisms must be as effective as possible while still considering their efficiency.

Importance of such measures in achieving and maintaining a world free of nuclear weapons

The international community has demonstrated increasing interest in how nuclear-weapon States comply with and implement treaties or agreements relating to nuclear disarmament and arms control. Verifiability makes it possible to confirm whether parties implement and comply with their treaty obligations. The three principles of verifiability, irreversibility and transparency are needed to advance the nuclear disarmament process and are indispensable to ensuring the effectiveness of nuclear disarmament measures. These principles have been mentioned in relevant documents, including the Final Document of the 2010 Review Conference of the Parties to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons.

Pursuant to article VI of the Non-Proliferation Treaty, all States parties, including non-nuclear-weapon States as well as nuclear-weapon States, are responsible for efforts towards a world free of nuclear weapons.

It is extremely difficult technically to conduct verification on nuclear disarmament even among nuclear-weapon States because this involves national security at the most confidential level. Serious challenges will arise in nuclear disarmament verification efforts with the involvement of non-nuclear-weapon States due to obligations in articles I and II of the Non-Proliferation Treaty: under article I, nuclear-weapon States undertake not to transfer to any recipient whatsoever nuclear weapons or other nuclear explosive devices or control over such weapons or explosive devices directly, or indirectly, and not in any way to assist, encourage, or induce any non-nuclear-weapon State to manufacture or otherwise acquire nuclear weapons or other nuclear explosive devices, or control over such weapons or explosive devices; under article II of the Treaty, non-nuclear-weapon States undertake not to acquire or exercise control over nuclear weapons or other nuclear explosive devices and not to seek or receive assistance in the manufacture of such devices. Nuclear disarmament verification should provide credible assurance while ensuring the protection of highly sensitive and confidential information.

As the number of nuclear weapons decreases, the strategic value of a single nuclear warhead will increase, as will the level of assurance required for verification on disarmament treaties. Verification and transparency will thus become increasingly important. In addition, in order to realize the goal of a world without nuclear weapons, it will be necessary to establish a robust and reliable international verification system with the involvement of nuclear-weapon States.

There are certain conceptual gaps which need to be addressed. These include principles of nuclear disarmament verification, as well as clarification of scope, technologies required, etc., based on the various phases of the disarmament process. Japan also underlines the importance of developing tools and techniques for nuclear disarmament. To promote further work towards establishing a robust and reliable nuclear verification mechanism, we will be able to make use of lessons learned from the existing and previous international efforts, including the Trilateral Initiative, a cooperative effort by the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA), the United States of America and the Russian Federation, the United States-United Kingdom technical collaboration, the UK-Norway Initiative, the Quad Nuclear Verification Partnership and the International Partnership for Nuclear Disarmament Verification.

While further studies are still needed on the role to be played by non-nuclear-weapon States in actual verification activities for the nuclear disarmament of nuclear-weapon States, it is imperative to engage both nuclear-weapon and non-nuclear-weapon States in efforts to construct a robust and credible international verification regime. The participation of non-nuclear-weapon States in the nuclear disarmament verification process will contribute to the development of broader trust and confidence. From this point of view, Japan emphasizes the importance of capacity-building for non-nuclear-weapon States. Non-nuclear-weapon States' contributions are crucial to attaining and maintaining a world free of nuclear weapons.

Madagascar

[Original: English]
[27 May 2020]

Pacific nuclear applications are used in Madagascar in different socioeconomic sectors, such as nuclear medicine, radiotherapy, environmental preservation, water resources management, industry, energy planning, agriculture, mining, research and education. Indeed, Madagascar joined the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) in 1965, and became a party to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons in 1970. Madagascar has committed itself to the following legally binding instruments: (a) Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (entered into force on 27 November 1970); (b) application of safeguards in the context of the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (entered into force on 8 October 1970); (c) additional protocol (entered into force on 18 September 2003); (d) Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty; (e) Convention on the Physical Protection of Nuclear Material and Nuclear Facilities (entered into force in 2003); and (f) Amendment to the Convention on the Physical Protection of Nuclear Material (entered into force on 3 March 2017).

Madagascar has also concluded small quantities protocols to its comprehensive safeguards agreement.

Madagascar does not have any nuclear plants. However, safeguards are applied on all nuclear material in its territory, jurisdiction or control for the exclusive purpose of verifying that such material is not diverted to nuclear weapons or other nuclear exploding devices.

Safeguards are embedded in legally binding agreements. Madagascar accepts these safeguards through the conclusion of such agreements with IAEA. In this regard, Madagascar has implemented the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons and safeguards agreement by strengthening measures under the additional protocol, which include:

- Provision of information about uranium mines and other locations where nuclear material intended for non-nuclear uses is available

- Provision of information on the production and export of sensitive nuclear material, and access by IAEA to the manufacturing sites
- Provision of periodic (quarterly) reports to IAEA on the possible import and export of nuclear materials
- Collection by IAEA of environmental samples beyond the declared locations, when the Agency deems it necessary
- Simplified procedure for the designation of IAEA inspectors, the issuance of multiple entry/exit visas and the use by IAEA of internationally established communication systems.

Mexico

[Original: Spanish]

[29 May 2020]

Mexico neither possesses nor has it ever possessed weapons of mass destruction or weapons that have inhumane and indiscriminate effects. Furthermore, it does not produce such weapons and has never done so. This is in accordance with the constant and committed position of Mexico in favour of the prohibition of such weapons, and of general and complete disarmament: the only guarantee for achieving a more safe, peaceful and equitable world for present and future generations.

Mexico believes that international verification is a fundamental principle for achieving nuclear disarmament and that, to build confidence, it must be accompanied by transparency.

Mexico has repeatedly stressed that unilateral, bilateral and regional nuclear arms reduction efforts must be internationally verified. It has also emphasized that States parties to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons have committed to conducting disarmament in accordance with the principles of transparency, verifiability and irreversibility.

In this connection, Mexican experts participated in the Group of Governmental Experts to consider the role of verification in advancing nuclear disarmament, established pursuant to General Assembly resolution [71/67](#).

With regard to the report contained in General Assembly document [74/90](#), Mexico has the following substantive views:

The report reflects the work carried out by the Group of Governmental Experts. For Mexico it was important that the Group analyse various ways in which verification could be carried out, and that it examine the role that both nuclear- and non-nuclear-weapon States could have in the verification process.

Mexico believes that the report reflects how the Group examined the concepts and how it had a substantive exchange of views, in which all positions were heard. However, while Mexico welcomes the adoption of the Group's report by consensus, it regrets that there were very few women in the Group, and a large majority of men, a fact that was omitted from the report.

The topic of nuclear disarmament verification is very broad and includes both political elements, largely related to confidence-building measures, and technical elements. The former relate to "what is expected" of verification, while the latter relate to the "how to" of conducting verification. While both elements must be explored in greater depth, Mexico believes that the former should guide the latter.

Regardless of the diversity of views on the approach to be followed to achieve the total elimination of nuclear weapons, States must explore verification mechanisms

that might contribute to the advancement of nuclear disarmament. In exploring such mechanisms, States should both consider instruments and the contribution of existing institutions, as well as proposing the creation of those instruments and institutions they deem necessary.

With regard to the establishment of a group of scientific and technical experts, Mexico believes that such a group could be a useful tool once there is clarity, or a specific agreement, on the measures that will provide certainty that all actors are doing their part in both the process of achieving a world free of nuclear weapons and in maintaining it, thereby ensuring the irreversibility of the total elimination of nuclear weapons. A group of scientific and technical experts should not be established without a clear mandate, or without a mandate directly related to those two objectives.

Mexico would consider it very useful, therefore, for the group of governmental experts to be established pursuant to General Assembly resolution [74/50](#) to particularly focus both on identifying verification measures that could contribute to building confidence among States that nuclear disarmament is taking place in a transparent and irreversible manner, and also on identifying measures that could contribute to maintaining a world free of nuclear weapons, once such weapons have been totally eliminated. The measures suggested or recommended by that group would not be expected to be restrictive or comprehensive, but simply to provide a sort of road map to guide the development of measures, and even agreements, to be used both in the process of moving towards global zero and in the maintenance of a nuclear-weapon-free world.

Netherlands

[Original: English]
[12 May 2020]

Importance of nuclear disarmament verification

The Netherlands fully supports the conclusion, in the final report of the Group of Governmental Experts to consider the role of verification in advancing nuclear disarmament, that verification is essential in the process of nuclear disarmament, and to achieving a world without nuclear weapons.

Verification, in general, is a process that helps to ensure that nuclear disarmament agreements, once concluded, are adhered to by the States parties to those agreements. It does so by providing assurances that violations of the agreement can be detected in time for an effective response. This discourages defection from such agreements (as this makes it less likely that advantages can be gained through undetected non-compliance), thereby raising the level of confidence in such agreements overall.

Verification is treaty-dependent. Nuclear disarmament verification requirements will vary depending on the question of whether the disarmament process is in a stage of reductions, limitations, caps, elimination of nuclear weapons or maintaining a Global Zero. While it is therefore clear that verification mechanisms cannot be negotiated in the absence of a relevant disarmament agreement, it is important to start developing different options for such mechanisms in advance, as it is beyond question that future disarmament agreements will require verification technologies, mechanisms and procedures that do not yet exist.

International efforts on nuclear disarmament verification are, therefore, crucial steps towards furthering the disarmament process and achieving a world free of nuclear weapons through the full implementation of article VI of the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons.

Role of the Netherlands

The Netherlands has played an active and constructive role in international efforts on nuclear disarmament verification.

The Netherlands has been a Co-Chair of working groups in the International Partnership for Nuclear Disarmament Verification since its creation in 2015. The Netherlands co-chaired working group 1 on monitoring and verification objectives from 2015 to 2017, and working group 5 on verification of reductions from 2017 to 2019. Additionally, the Netherlands has supported the work of all International Partnership working groups by sending nuclear and other experts to participate in its meetings and contribute to its outcome documents.

Moreover, the Netherlands hosted an International Partnership working group meeting in Utrecht in June 2019, which included a full-day tabletop exercise, as well as a technology demonstration. The Netherlands participated in the joint Franco-German exercise on verification of nuclear disarmament held in Jülich, Germany, in September 2019, and provided a team leader.

The Netherlands has also instigated technological research into high-explosive detection methods, which would form an important part of the verification of nuclear dismantlement process. The research was carried out by the Netherlands Organisation for Applied Scientific Research, which analysed different methods and technologies for detecting the presence and/or absence of high explosives in order to determine their applicability in a nuclear disarmament verification context. The results of this research have been made available to the International Partnership for Nuclear Disarmament Verification.

The Netherlands was one of the lead sponsors of General Assembly resolution [71/67](#), in which the Assembly requested the Secretary-General to establish a Group of Governmental Experts to consider the role of verification in advancing nuclear disarmament. As a member of the Group of Governmental Experts, the Netherlands has actively participated in the discussions and advocated the adoption of an ambitious substantive final report. Together with other experts, the Netherlands submitted several working papers to the Group on verification principles and on issues of institutionalization, which are annexed to the report (see [A/74/90](#)).

First Group of Governmental Experts to consider the role of verification in advancing nuclear disarmament

The Group of Governmental Experts to consider the role of verification in advancing nuclear disarmament produced a consensus report ([A/74/90](#)) containing a number of conclusions, recommendations and points of convergence of opinion among its members, including on principles on verification in advancing nuclear disarmament. These principles, focused on the legal context of verification, its treaty-specific nature, non-proliferation, safety and security requirements, as well as the principles of effectiveness, efficiency and non-discrimination, help to establish a common view of nuclear disarmament verification and should serve as a generally recognized starting point for international discussions on this issue.

The Group of Governmental Experts' report also reflects lessons that were learned on the basis of the sharing of experiences of other verification-related initiatives and existing verification mechanisms. Several valuable observations can be found in the annex to the Group's report, which contains the Chair's summary of different presentations made in relation to verification experiences, as well as the ensuing discussions by the Group.

On institutional questions related to nuclear disarmament verification, the Netherlands, together with Switzerland, submitted a working paper to the Group of Governmental Experts in which it considered different variations of international cooperation on verification and corresponding levels of multilateralization. In the paper, different options were assessed for institutional models for verification mechanisms, elaborating requirements for multilateral and non-discriminatory nuclear disarmament verification arrangements. The authors concluded, *inter alia*, that while it is not possible to predict the political, security, institutional or legal context of a future disarmament process, it is clear that at some point in advancing towards the complete elimination of nuclear arsenals a gradual transition will take place from verification support mechanisms with predominantly bilateral features to those that are more multilateral. The Netherlands emphasizes that a credible multilateral verification regime in which all States have confidence will be essential for achieving and maintaining a world without nuclear weapons.

The Netherlands emphasizes that the Group of Governmental Experts recommended, by consensus, that States Members of the United Nations consider further work related to the role of verification in advancing nuclear disarmament, taking the Group's report into account. The Group also concluded that all States could contribute to aspects of nuclear disarmament verification and no State is restricted from developing verification techniques and methodologies. The Group also considered various next steps for nuclear disarmament verification work.

Role and focus of the next Group of Governmental Experts

The Netherlands was a lead sponsor of General Assembly resolution [74/50](#), in which the Assembly established a second Group of Governmental Experts to further consider nuclear disarmament verification issues, including the concept of a Group of Scientific and Technical Experts, building on the report of the first Group of Governmental Experts. The Netherlands supports proposals to focus the work of the second Group of Governmental Experts on issues of international cooperation and capacity-building. Much valuable conceptual work has been done in the field of nuclear disarmament verification over the past few years, especially by the first Group of Governmental Experts and in the context of the International Partnership for Nuclear Disarmament Verification. The priority of the international community should now be to develop the technologies, methods, procedures and know-how necessary to build on these concepts.

The Netherlands supports the general idea of establishing an international body to support international research of this kind, which could be called a "Group of Scientific and Technological Experts" or be given any other name. The new Group of Governmental Experts should discuss the mandate, objectives, parameters, rules and procedures of such a body. Of key importance, to the Netherlands, is that such a body should operate in an inclusive, transparent and apolitical manner. The Group of Governmental Experts should decide how those values could best be safeguarded and promoted.

A Group of Scientific and Technological Experts should facilitate and stimulate research and capacity-building in the field of nuclear disarmament verification, including by identifying gaps in existing knowledge, by collating and disseminating relevant information to States Members of the United Nations and by helping to establish increased international collaboration between experts, where helpful. Capacity mapping is important as it can help researchers to focus on specific areas in which progress is most welcome.

The Netherlands wishes to emphasize that a Group of Scientific and Technological Experts (or another international body) should not be a political

decision-making body; nor should it be mandated to appraise or evaluate research done by others. Conducting research on nuclear disarmament verification is the prerogative of any State, academic institution, think tank or other research institution. It is, and should remain, independent: a bottom-up process, in which science and research are firmly separated from political discussions.

Norway

[Original: English]
[7 May 2020]

Norway has had the honour of chairing the Group of Governmental Experts to consider the role of verification in advancing nuclear disarmament. In line with the mandate set out in General Assembly resolution [71/67](#), the Group of Governmental Experts has examined the importance of nuclear disarmament verification measures in efforts to achieve and maintain a world without nuclear weapons.

The Group took the Secretary-General's report on the views of Member States ([A/72/304](#)) as the point of departure for its work. It also benefited from a number of presentations on relevant past experiences and other verification regimes. A total of 17 working papers were submitted in support of the work of the Group. A number of these were jointly submitted by two or more experts.

The Group of Governmental Experts adopted a consensus report ([A/74/90](#)). Norway would like to express its appreciation for the constructive engagement of all the experts who participated in the Group. The work was conducted in a positive and collegial atmosphere. Consensus was achieved because everyone involved was ready to make the necessary compromises.

Compromises come at a price for all participants. Norway for its part would have preferred stronger wording in the following three areas:

(a) In Norway's view, multilateral verification regimes trusted by nuclear possessor and non-possessor States alike will be vital to build necessary global confidence and credibility in the implementation of future treaties on multilateral reductions of nuclear weapons. Norway would have liked to have seen a stronger emphasis on this point in the report, including what sort of preparatory work would be required;

(b) A multilateral verification regime will require nuclear disarmament verification capacity and capabilities in all regions. Norway sees a strong need to build such regional capacity and capabilities. Creating regional hubs of expertise would be a first, practical step in this direction. Norway is working to establish a multilateral funding mechanism for this purpose;

(c) Norway considers that the proposal to establish a multilateral Group of Scientific and Technical Experts on nuclear disarmament verification has merit. The Group of Governmental Experts engaged in an initial discussion of this concept, but did not arrive at a consensual recommendation. We would welcome a thorough discussion of this concept by the new Group of Governmental Experts, as envisioned in the mandate set out in General Assembly resolution [74/50](#). This discussion could be focused on the role and the mandate of a Group of Scientific and Technical Experts, and consider what multilateral institutions might best facilitate such a group.

Although Norway would have appreciated stronger wording on certain follow-up matters, we are pleased that the Group of Governmental Experts was able to submit a consensus report to the General Assembly.

In 2019, Norway, together with Brazil, the Netherlands, South Africa, Switzerland and the United Kingdom, put forward a new resolution on nuclear disarmament verification. This resolution built on resolution [71/67](#) and the report of the Group of Governmental Experts ([A/74/90](#)). Resolution [74/50](#) received broad support at the General Assembly in December 2019, with 178 States voting in favour of it. Our aim in putting forward this resolution was twofold: first, to gain the approval of the Assembly for the Group's report, and second, to decide on follow-on activities within the United Nations framework. We appreciate the broad support for this resolution and stand ready to continue our active role in multilateral cooperation on nuclear disarmament verification.

Switzerland

[Original: English]
[31 May 2020]

Switzerland considers nuclear disarmament verification essential in order to ensure a credible reduction or elimination of nuclear weapons.

On the one hand, the development of nuclear disarmament verification concepts, tools and technologies can contribute to building confidence and trust needed in arms control and disarmament cooperation. On the other hand, in the context of agreements mandating the verifiable elimination of nuclear warheads or arsenals, and as possessors begin to gradually reduce nuclear weapons, nuclear disarmament verification concepts, tools and technologies will be required to facilitate compliance and deter cheating on arms control agreements.

Pending such agreements, and irrespective of different views on pathways to nuclear disarmament, verification instruments, techniques and methods can be advanced. Such preparatory work can be taken forward now.

Switzerland's commitment to advancing nuclear disarmament verification

Switzerland was a lead sponsor of General Assembly resolution [71/67](#), in which the Assembly requested the Secretary-General to establish a Group of Governmental Experts to consider the role of verification in advancing nuclear disarmament.

Switzerland supported the Group of Governmental Experts actively, including through informal seminars at Wilton Park. Switzerland's expert contributed to the discussions in the Group, notably by submitting a working paper in collaboration with other experts, entitled "Who verifies: parameters for multilateralization of initiatives".

Switzerland also organized an informal seminar on nuclear disarmament verification during its 2018 presidency of the Conference on Disarmament.

Switzerland's view on the report of the Group of Governmental Experts

Switzerland is pleased that the Group of Governmental Experts, under the able leadership of Norway, adopted a consensus report ([A/74/90](#)). The report contains a number of conclusions, recommendations and points of convergence of opinion among the Group's members, including on principles on verification in advancing nuclear disarmament.

However, Switzerland would have favoured a more comprehensive report with stronger wording, including in areas such as the value of multilateral verification procedures or institutions, the benefits of international cooperation on nuclear disarmament verification between nuclear-weapon States and non-nuclear-weapon States, as well as the importance of building verification capacities and capabilities.

Switzerland's views on further work on nuclear disarmament verification

Switzerland is convinced that further work is needed in the area of nuclear disarmament verification. In 2019, Switzerland, together with Norway, Brazil, the Netherlands, South Africa and the United Kingdom, put forward resolution [74/50](#) paving the way for a range of follow-on activities in the United Nations framework.

Switzerland shares the view that future disarmament treaties may very well go beyond a bilateral nature, relying on multilateral verification procedures or institutions. Therefore, Switzerland emphasizes the importance of multilateral nuclear disarmament verification work, namely:

- Affirmation that a credible multilateral verification regime, in which all States have confidence, will be essential for achieving and maintaining a world without nuclear weapons
- Definition of basic elements and techniques required by such future multilateral nuclear disarmament verification arrangements
- Mapping of specific challenges for multilateral verification mechanisms and procedures, and ideas/solutions on how such challenges can be taken into account and overcome, including through capacity-building.

Given the importance of international cooperation in the area of nuclear disarmament verification, Switzerland emphasizes the value of the work in ongoing verification initiatives, notably in the context of the International Partnership on Nuclear Disarmament Verification. The International Partnership is an innovative multilateral partnership, which allows non-nuclear-weapon States, in cooperation with possessing States, to play an important role in the identification and development of credible, practical and effective multilateral nuclear disarmament verification measures. In addition, Switzerland supports further work on ideas and initiatives to build verification capacities and capabilities.

Switzerland sees an opportunity for the upcoming Group of Governmental Experts to agree on recommendations regarding the mandate, objectives, parameters, rules and procedures of a new international body to support international research of this kind. Such a "Group of Scientific and Technological Experts" should operate in an inclusive, collaborative, transparent and science-based manner.

III. Reply received from the European Union

[Original: English]

[20 May 2020]

The European Union and its member States remain committed to the pursuit of nuclear disarmament, in accordance with article VI of the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons, and stress the need for concrete progress towards the full implementation of article VI of the Treaty, especially through an overall reduction in the global stockpile of nuclear weapons, taking into account the special responsibility of States that possess the largest nuclear arsenals. We believe that concrete steps towards enabling verification of the disarmament process could contribute to the full implementation of article VI. The establishment of effective verification measures will be an important and necessary step in fulfilling this goal. While verification is not an end in itself, further development of the multilateral nuclear disarmament verification capabilities would assist in the achievement and maintenance of a world without nuclear weapons. The European Union emphasizes that all States can make important contributions to the field of nuclear disarmament verification. We encourage in particular all nuclear-weapon States and other States

possessing nuclear weapons to contribute to such activities. Such engagement would help to deepen trust and develop confidence also between nuclear-weapon States and non-nuclear-weapon States.

The European Union contributed a working paper on this topic to the second session, held in 2018, of the Preparatory Committee for the 2020 Review Conference of the Parties to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapon and has become a supporter of action 8 of the Secretary General's agenda for disarmament to develop nuclear disarmament verification.

The European Union supports the strengthening of the effectiveness and efficiency of the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) safeguards system that plays an indispensable role in the implementation of the non-proliferation obligations under the Treaty. Comprehensive safeguards agreements, together with the additional protocol, constitute the current verification standard. The close cooperation between the European Atomic Energy Community and IAEA allows for effective and efficient safeguards. The European Union actively supports the IAEA safeguards system through the European Commission Safeguards Support Programme and the support programmes of some of its member States.

The entry into force and universalization of the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty and the verification capabilities of the International Monitoring System are of crucial importance and remain top priorities for the European Union. The European Union will continue to provide both diplomatic and financial support for the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty and its International Monitoring System in the future. The European Union has also become a supporter of action 4 of the Secretary General's agenda for disarmament to bring Treaty into force.

On 26 February 2018, the Council of the European Union adopted Council Decision (CFSP) 2018/298 on Union support for the activities of the Preparatory Commission for the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty Organization in order to strengthen its monitoring and verification capabilities. The financial support of over 4.5 million euros over a two-year period is for: certified auxiliary seismic stations that are part of the International Monitoring System of the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty Organization; the development of noble gas sampling systems through the study of materials for improved adsorption of xenon; continuing the radio-xenon background measurement campaigns in different regions of the world; the ensemble prediction system to quantify uncertainties and confidence levels in atmospheric transport modelling simulations; the scientific evaluation of the increase in resolution for atmospheric transport modelling tools; the development of new software; enhancing the on-site inspection of noble gas processing and detection; enhancing the automatic processing and integration capabilities in a seismic, hydro-acoustic and infrasound national data centre-in-a-box; integrated outreach and capacity-building targeting State signatories and non-signatories. The European Union and its member States also contribute to the maintenance and strengthening of the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty verification regime through the provision of technical support and advice to Working Group B of the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty Organization and other workshops and seminars.

The European Union remains united and committed to verifiable treaty-based nuclear disarmament and arms control and stresses the need to renew multilateral efforts and revitalize multilateral negotiating bodies, in particular the Conference on Disarmament.

The European Union and its member States have significant experience that can be instrumental in effectively advancing the disarmament verification agenda and developing well-elaborated, certified and robust technical procedures and technologies, as all States parties have also committed themselves to applying the

principles of irreversibility, verifiability and transparency in relation to the implementation of their obligations under the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons.

In addition to the work undertaken by States members of the European Union, significant research and development efforts are carried out by the Joint Research Centre of the European Commission, as well as the European Atomic Energy Community, in the fields of nuclear safety and security, safeguards and non-proliferation. Furthermore, the European Safeguards Research and Development Association has added special sessions on disarmament verification to its symposiums.

The European Union also supports broader partnerships and cooperative verification arrangements, such as the International Partnership for Nuclear Disarmament Verification, in which the European Union and several of its member States participate. In particular, the European Union welcomes the successful outcomes of the International Partnership's first two phases, which clearly demonstrate the value of a multilateral approach to nuclear disarmament verification while recognizing the associated challenges. Thanks to the cooperation among the International Partnership's partners, phase 3 will be an important step in addressing these challenges through practical work, incorporating scenario-based discussions, hands-on exercises and technology demonstrations. We encourage further efforts in the International Partnership and other relevant forums, including the Quad Nuclear Verification Partnership and the United Kingdom-Norway initiative.

The European Union welcomes the Joint Franco-German exercise on verification of nuclear disarmament held in September 2019 as a concrete step towards developing reliable and sound multilateral nuclear disarmament verification procedures. This practical exercise demonstrates vividly that nuclear-weapon States and non-nuclear-weapon States can work together to advance transparency, irreversibility and verifiability in a way that does not compromise proliferation-sensitive information or other safety and security considerations. In addition, the European Union welcomes Belgium's exercise of plutonium measurement methods in the autumn of 2019, as well as the research into and demonstration of high-explosive detection methods carried out by the Netherlands within the format of the International Partnership for Nuclear Disarmament Verification.

The European Union and its member States supported the establishment of the Group of Governmental Experts to consider the role of verification in advancing nuclear disarmament at the General Assembly in 2016, welcomed the discussions in the Group of Governmental Experts and agreed with the recommendation to pursue further work, taking into account the Group's report. The European Union fully supports Assembly resolution [74/50](#) and the establishment of a new group of governmental experts, to be convened in 2021 and 2022.

Through its continued financial support to the Group of 7 Global Partnership against the Spread of Weapons and Materials of Mass Destruction and to the International Science and Technology Centre, the European Union has significantly contributed to international efforts to destroy and eliminate stockpiles of weapons of mass destruction and fissile material and to redirect scientific and technical expertise for peaceful purposes.
