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SUMMARY REMARKS – OWEA “OTHER INITIATIVES”

Focus of the session was to take stock of "other initiatives and proposals on nuclear disarmament". At the outset of our discussions, I challenged participants to consider how such a stock taking exercise could help the OEWG to identify areas of shared concern and identify how progress might be made in tackling them.

I would like to congratulate the participants in having effectively responded.

We had a rich and fruitful exchange, well set up in the first instance by our two panelists - Mr. Jarmo Sareva, Director of UNODA Geneva, and Mr. Thomas Nash of Article 36.

Mr. Sareva reviewed the ambitious framework set out by the Secretary General over the last 5 years, which in outlining specific measures to be taken (as encompassed in his 5 proposals) captures the broad aspirations of states and interested civil society but which has not been realized. Mr. Sareva underscored that the while the agenda has evolved, the SG has nevertheless remained resolutely committed to disarmament and brutally honest in his assessment of systemic and political deficiencies in achieving nuclear disarmament, including the consequences of inertia in the CD, and outlining practical steps to be taken to reverse the tide.

Mr. Sareva noted that important momentum created in 2008/2009 period, including high level political engagement, risks dimming due to frustrations at "endlessly growing list of pre-conditions" (which can be contagious), and a lack of courage and leadership.

Mr. Sareva underscored the need to restore the relationship and appropriate balance between ends and means - suggesting far too much emphasis was being placed on the latter rather than the former (the steps or building blocks were at risk of becoming ends in themselves). He concluded by recalling the proposal by SG and HRep to promote a holistic approach to nuclear disarmament which can be pursued either through a comprehensive framework or by considering the possibility of fostering separate but mutually reinforcing instruments that advance disarmament.
Mr. Nash, for his part, emphasized the significance of recent initiatives that saw diverse communities working in partnership to re-frame the discussion on nuclear weapons around their humanitarian consequences and stigmatization, calling for the rejection of WMD.

Mr. Nash put forward a proposal to develop an outright ban on nuclear weapons, and indicated that momentum towards such a treaty could be established over the course of the next several years. Such a ban he argued could be independent of the NPT process and build on or leverage existing NWFZ. It would include a prohibition on the use, transfer or assistance (but not necessarily requiring ending participation in alliances), obligation to eliminate of stocks of nukes asap (leaving it up to the NWS themselves through a future treaty); and some form of verification.

Mr. Nash suggested such a process should be led by the NNWS, indicating that Oslo and the OEWG demonstrate don't need to have NWS at the table.

In the substantive discussion that followed, some 13 delegations took the floor and 2 NGOs.

Many delegations pointed to the benefit of identifying "building blocks" necessary for a world free of nuclear disarmament while several delegations spoke to the value of clarifying an over-arching framework that would outline the content required to take the disarmament agenda forward. Such a framework would be informed by an assessment of existing gaps and a clarification of the instruments required, including what partial measures might follow others such as an FMCT. It was proposed that such a framework could usefully draw or build upon the SGs proposals, and could perhaps be a useful contribution by the OWEW.

Some delegations signaled their interest in pursuing a set of separate but mutually reinforcing instruments and questioned whether a ban established by the NNWS would result in disarmament, while others noted their support for nuclear weapons convention (building on the Malaysian/Costa Rican model), backed by a strong system of verification. Still others suggested both approaches could be pursued in a complementary manner, and a few participants reiterated their interest in seeing the pursuit immediately of specific measures that would not require extensive negotiations (such as disarmament education,
transparency, review of military doctrines, commitment to IAEA Additional Protocols). Other proposals included the global zero plan and the Rajiv Gandhi plan.

Many participants expressed concern at the trust deficit which had emerged within the multilateral nuclear disarmament sphere. While some participants questioned the commitment and role of the NWS (and the UNSC), others suggested that it was unproductive to foster such divisions when ultimately while there may be divergence on the means, almost all states agreed on the ends desired (a nuclear free world). Nevertheless, several participants suggested that it was time for NNWS to change the parameters of the debate, re-assess existing processes, and be clear about the expectations for NWS (including on things such as transparency).

In closing and in response to the Chair's request to provoke further debate this afternoon, I would like to agree with Mr. Sareva and others who suggested that focusing on differences in the means by which states believe disarmament can best be achieved is distracting us from our shared goal of achieving a world free of nuclear weapons. Indeed, this is much of what has trapped us into seemingly endless deadlock in the CD. I heard yesterday a desire expressed from states from different regions and different perspectives to identify the steps or "building blocks" necessary for such a world to be achieved. As the OEWG moves beyond taking stock of existing proposals, there is an opportunity to try to define these building blocks together and make a real contribution towards nuclear disarmament. However, to do so will likely require setting aside the need for clear agreement on the route that might be used to achieve these building blocks whether step by step, holistic or big bang. For if we get too caught up on the issues that likely cannot be resolved in these 15 days, we risk losing an opportunity to show leadership and courage.