

Germany's Views on the Open Ended Working Group

Pursuant to resolution 68/46 entitled "Taking forward multilateral nuclear disarmament negotiations", adopted by the 68th General Assembly on 5 December 2013, and by which the United Nations Office of Disarmament Affairs seeks the views of UN Member States in its letter of 20 February 2014 (ODA Document 29-2014/MNDN), Germany presents the following position on taking forward multilateral nuclear disarmament negotiations and, in particular, the role of the United Nations Open Ended Working Group (OEWG) to assist this process:

1. Introduction

Germany shares the goal of a peaceful and secure world free of nuclear weapons. Given States' opposing ideas and approaches for achieving that goal, Germany suggests focusing on existing commonalities by identifying concrete and practical "building blocks" for further nuclear disarmament and eventual elimination of nuclear weapons, also given the risk of catastrophic humanitarian consequences from their use. Progress is possible through practical, effective and confidence-building measures, particularly by states possessing nuclear weapons. In addition, Germany calls for full commitment to non-proliferation.

2. Building Blocks Approach

Referring to the Working Paper of 26 June 2013 entitled "Building Blocks for a World without Nuclear Weapons" (A/AC.281/WP.4) submitted together with Australia, Belgium, Canada, Finland, Italy, Japan, the Netherlands, Poland, Portugal, Slovakia and Sweden, Germany subscribes to a "building blocks" approach for nuclear disarmament allowing for parallel and simultaneous steps on a multilateral, plurilateral, bilateral or unilateral basis.

Past bilateral and unilateral "building blocks" have significantly reduced the global nuclear-weapon stockpile since its peak in the 1980s. Crucial multilateral "building blocks" already exist; for example, the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) safeguards system, the Partial Test Ban Treaty, the Outer Space Treaty, the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT), the Sea Bed Arms Control Treaty, the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty (CTBT), the International Convention for the Suppression of Acts of Nuclear Terrorism, as well as the multilateral disarmament machinery. However, further multilateral "building blocks" are needed. Therefore, framed by its ongoing commitment to the implementation of the 2010 NPT Action Plan, Germany, once again, suggests the following practical actions in support of a world without nuclear weapons:

- FMCT: Negotiating a verifiable and non-discriminatory treaty banning the production of fissile material for nuclear weapons or other nuclear explosive devices, which deals with all relevant questions for the achievement of its purpose; pending negotiation and entry into force of such a treaty, maintenance or declaration by all states possessing nuclear weapons of moratoriums on the production of fissile material for nuclear weapons purposes; designating fissile material no longer required for military purposes and the development of legally binding verification arrangements, within the context of the IAEA, to ensure the irreversible removal of such fissile material.
- CTBT: Entry into force of the CTBT; pending the entry into force of the CTBT, maintenance or declaration by all states possessing nuclear weapons of moratoriums on nuclear weapons tests, as well as restraint from the use of new nuclear weapons technologies and from any action that would defeat the object and purpose of that Treaty. In the 21st century, there is no place for nuclear tests. Germany calls upon all states which have not yet done so to ratify the Treaty. It is hard to see why states who are in a position to ratify should wait for other states to take the lead.
- Negative Security Assurances (NSAs): Continued commitment by all states possessing nuclear weapons to fully respect their binding commitments with regard to security assurances or to extend such assurances if they have not yet done so.
- Conference on Disarmament (CD): returning to substantive work in the Conference on Disarmament, notably dealing with nuclear disarmament and substantive discussion of negative security assurances (NSAs). Moreover, elaborating on recommendations dealing with all aspects of nuclear disarmament and NSAs including the consideration of internationally legally binding instruments. IAEA-Safeguards: Supporting and strengthening the IAEA safeguards system, including universal adherence to comprehensive safeguards agreements and additional protocols.
- Universalizing the International Convention for the Suppression of Acts of Nuclear Terrorism.
- Continuing work on developing verification schemes, including technical know-how for nuclear disarmament, in order to guarantee that nuclear materials and technology are used for peaceful purposes.

Since the aforementioned multilateral “building blocks” are in part controversial and long-term, Germany proposes the following unilateral or bilateral actionable “building blocks” in the short-term:

- Still further reducing the role of nuclear weapons in security doctrines as reflected in Action 5 of the 2010-NPT Action Plan;
- Increasing the transparency of nuclear arsenals and fissile material in stockpiles. The

Non-Proliferation and Disarmament Initiative, in which Germany participates, tabled a proposal on how to increase transparency. Germany welcomes the timely submission of the reports of the Nuclear Weapon States to the 3rd NPT PrepCom, which partly fell short of the transparency-standards proposed by the NPDI. Transparency would also be appreciated with respect to operational alertness-levels which could be still further reduced.

- Reducing the number of deployed strategic nuclear weapons and the number of non-strategic and non-deployed nuclear weapons;
- Promoting disarmament and non-proliferation education including on humanitarian consequences of the use of nuclear weapons.
- Strengthening nuclear-weapon-free zones and creating new nuclear-weapon-free zones, including in pursuit of NPT universalization;
- Dismantling or converting for peaceful uses facilities for the production of fissile material for use in nuclear weapons or other nuclear explosive devices;

5. The role of the OEWG

Germany voted in favour of resolution 68/46 as a venue for further impetus to nuclear disarmament, especially given the ongoing stalemate of the Conference on Disarmament. Yet, while appreciating the valuable contribution by the OEWG thus far in reflecting on various approaches for nuclear disarmament, Germany is wondering whether an extended OEWG mandate yields added value as long as the Nuclear Weapon States are not taking part in the debates. Nevertheless, Germany welcomes the opportunity by an OEWG for non CD-Member States and Civil Society to take an active role in the deliberations.