Statement by Mr Knut Langeland
Special representative for Disarmament Affairs, MFA
Norway

Open-Ended Working Group on Taking Forward Multilateral Nuclear Disarmament Negotiations

3 May 2016

Thank Ambassador de Klerk for his comprehensive presentation and your answers to the questions posed by delegations.

Transparency is a key component to promote predictably, stability and confidence. Transparency thus is essential to support disarmament and arms control agreements in general. Reporting is essential to enhance transparency. While it is crucial that Nuclear weapon state provide transparency through reporting, non-nuclear weapon states also have obligations in this field.

My delegation agrees that there is a link between transparency and verification. Over the years, there has been articulated different views on the necessity of verification in arms control agreements. A famous quotation from the 1980s was "Trust, but verify". At the other end of the specter, the SORT (Moscow Treaty) was subject to criticism, because it lacked credible verification tools. Fortunately, other bilateral agreements such as New START have in place verification mechanisms, but of bilateral character.

Our objective is to abolish nuclear weapons, which will have to be regulated by a legally binding framework. As said yesterday, from our perspective this will have to be reached through mutual, balanced, irreversible and verifiable elimination of nuclear weapons. Yet, there are different views in this room on how to achieve the zero objective. As said at the February session of the OEWG, we need to start preparing us for a world without nuclear weapons.

One important component in such a preparation is to ensure that we can genuinely reach zero, and maintain a world without nuclear weapons. In this light, the development of verification tools to support nuclear disarmament process is highly relevant. SSOD I and outcome documents of NPT review conferences have affirmed that transparency, verification and irreversibly are fundamental principles on nuclear disarmament.

One important dimension of any verification regime is to ensure that non-nuclear weapons states are engaged in verification, in conformity of the NPT non-proliferation obligations. That was the motivation of the U.K.-Norway Initiative. The IPNDV represents another avenue of bringing together nuclear weapon states and non-nuclear weapon states. Norway is an active member of this Partnership and its last plenary was held in Oslo.

Through these different initiatives, as well as new ones in the pipeline, a broad spectrum of agencies and research institutions in Norway have been engaging, and important capacity and knowledge has been developed.

My question relates to what will be needed to develop verification arrangements for the future and the role of the IAEA. There are lessons to be drawn from the IAEA safeguards as well as monitoring and verification system from the CTBT. In this vein will there be a need to work more on capacity
building in order to ensure that non-nuclear can play a meaningful role in upholding a world without nuclear weapons.

Thank you,