Intervention by Thailand

Panel III on additional measures to increase awareness and understanding of the complexity of and interrelationship between the wide range of humanitarian consequences that would result from any nuclear detonation

First of all, I would like to join other delegations in thanking Dr. Ira Helfand and Ms. Sara Seckenes for their insightful and powerful presentations which provide good basis for our discussion today.

Over the past years, with the humanitarian initiative gaining momentum in our deliberations, the issue of nuclear disarmament has been viewed through different lens. The discourse on how nuclear disarmament is perceived has been broadened to better reflect the harsh reality, factoring in the calculation with missing pieces of catastrophic humanitarian consequences. It is our collective efforts to ensure human security of all. Without human security, national security cannot be achieved and sustained.

The humanitarian initiative has been successful in raising public awareness of the catastrophic consequences of nuclear weapons, making the issue of nuclear disarmament appear more relevant to everyone. It has also pointed us to the missed opportunities that we should have engaged new actors in the discussion on nuclear disarmament long time ago. However, our efforts so far are still not sufficient. It is imperative to continue our struggle to educate all groups of people -- government officials, parliamentarians, civil societies, and the general public, particularly youth -- and get them on board in our fight for a world without nuclear weapons, the goal that we all share.

Unfortunately, there are prevailing efforts that hold us back. We need to convince them to get everyone on board. This can be done by effective public awareness campaigns to stimulate strong popular support in order to influence policy makers and parliamentarians to make the right decision as they are responsible for the safety and security of their people amidst the grave dangers posed by the existence of nuclear weapons, particularly in those countries where there are nuclear warheads sitting in their territories. It is important to change the “narrative” of the issue by continuing to question the legitimacy of nuclear weapons.

Since the atomic bombs were dropped 70 years ago, the security environment may have changed over time, with non-traditional security threats gaining more attention. In fact, all these threats are interlinked but perhaps only a small circle of people are aware of that. From our deliberations in February as well as in other relevant forums, it is clear that humanitarian consequences of nuclear testing, even in unpopulated areas, are real and life threatening. Their impacts on our lives, our health, and our environment have made our development efforts in other fields more difficult.

Therefore, my delegation supports all the recommendations made by various delegations on additional measures to increase awareness and understanding of the complexity and interrelationship between the wide ranges of humanitarian consequences that
would result from any nuclear detonation. My delegation also wishes to commend the civil society who plays important roles and makes significant contribution in raising awareness and in their campaign against nuclear weapons.

My question to Ms. Sara Sekkenes is how the discussion on increasing awareness of the reality of the use of nuclear weapons and its humanitarian consequences could be taken in the context of Goal 16 of the SDGs.