Panel IV - Effective Legal Measures

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9 May 2016

The question ahead of us at this OEWG is very much about how to best invest our time and efforts to secure practical movement and build stalled forward momentum on nuclear disarmament.

Many of us participated in the NPT Review Conference and First Committee last year and will be aware of the highly polarized debate which took place. This was referred to by the distinguished Ambassador from Mexico. While he put forward the view that it was perhaps a necessary evil, I hope he would agree that such polarization is not desirable.

Effective measures that bring all of the international community together and build bridges in pursuit of our shared goal of a world free of nuclear weapons will be most effective. Measures that build trust and confidence are also essential.

We need to act wisely and do the hard work necessary.

Australia is pleased that yesterday, 8 May, we were able to cross one outstanding effective legal measure off the Progressive Approach list.

On this day, we achieved the entry into force of the 2005 Amendment to the Convention on the Physical Protection of Nuclear Material. IAEA Director-General Amano said that “the entry into force of the amendment demonstrates the determination of the international community to act together to strengthen nuclear security globally”

There is much more we can and should do.

The package of effective legal measures to be agreed at this OEWG should include the following elements:

A call for a renewed and energetic push from member states and civil society to steer the CTBT toward ratification in this 20th year since the treaty opened for signature.

Building on the 2015 FMCT GGE report, a recommendation which calls for the negotiation of a verifiable and non-discriminatory treaty banning the production of fissile material for nuclear weapons is a critical near term step we must take.

A recommendation for legally binding verification arrangements to be developed to ensure the irreversible removal of fissile material no longer required for military purposes.

There have been useful discussions and working papers submitted on negative security assurances at this OEWG and options in this area could be considered.
The modernisation of nuclear weapons has been addressed in some working papers, notably the Netherlands Institute for International Relations. Some of these proposals are worthy of further consideration.

We should encourage universalization of the International Convention for the Suppression of Acts of Nuclear Terrorism. Currently there are 115 signatories and 104 states parties.

This year will be an important year for UNSCR 1540 as a review is undertaken. We call on all states to actively contribute to the review - and hope the outcomes of the June review can be reflected in the final OEWG document.

The New Start arrangements have been successful in reducing the number of nuclear weapon holdings of the two largest possessor states. Post-New Start negotiations should be encouraged at the earliest. Beyond New Start, we need encourage broader plurilateral or multilateral nuclear weapons reduction negotiations and should consider what this negotiation process could look like.

We also need to encourage the further strengthening of nuclear weapons free zones and their creation in regions, on the basis of arrangements freely arrived at among States, where they do not yet exist.

As IAEA Director-General Amano said on the entry into force yesterday on the 2005 Amendment to the CPPNM - achievements can be made when the international community acts together.