

Joint Statement on disarmament and non-proliferation education

Mr. Chairman,

On behalf of the 29 countries – Argentina, Australia, Bolivia, Brazil, Canada, Chile, Colombia, Costa Rica, Dominican Republic, Ecuador, Egypt, El Salvador, Guatemala, Honduras, Hungary, Indonesia, Japan, Mexico, New Zealand, Nicaragua, Peru, Poland, Sweden, Thailand and Uruguay, the 25 co-sponsor countries of the resolutions entitled “United Nations study on disarmament and non-proliferation education” (A/RES/61/73 and A/RES/63/70) submitted to the 61st and 63rd Session of the UN General Assembly as well as Brundi, Cambodia, Italy, Switzerland, I would like to take the opportunity today to state our views on the importance and future direction of disarmament and non-proliferation education.

Before I take up this topic, though, it gives me great pleasure to note that in addition to the 20 countries that participated in this joint statement last year, 9 new countries have joined us this year, which is proof of the growing recognition of the importance of disarmament and non-proliferation education.

Mr. Chairman,

As the UN Secretary-General’s 2002 report “United Nations study on disarmament and non-proliferation education” points out, it is important in light of the changing concepts of security and threat to nurture new thinking at both the governmental and citizen levels. The objective of such new thinking is to empower individuals to make their contribution, as national and world citizens, to disarmament and non-proliferation by imparting knowledge and skills to them.

Raising public awareness through education is thus an important means for strengthening the disarmament and non-proliferation regime. For example, the public needs to be aware of the dangers of weapons of mass destruction and the tragic consequences of their use, as well as of the measures required to overcome the challenges caused by such weapons, including existing international legal frameworks and their operation.

It is our intention to continue to promote disarmament and non-proliferation for future generations by utilizing education more actively.

In this context, as stated in the biennial, consensus-adopted UNGA resolution entitled “United Nations study on disarmament and non-proliferation education”, we encourage all the NPT States Parties, the United Nations and other international and regional organizations, civil society and NGOs, to implement to

the extent possible the 34 recommendations contained in the UN Secretary General's 2002 report, especially in the field of nuclear disarmament and non-proliferation. The implementation of these recommendations should be undertaken with immediate, sustained and practical efforts in cooperation with relevant stakeholders, including research institutions, so as to maximize the educational benefits.

Here we can see a greater possibility for broader cooperation among NPT States Parties, international organizations and civil society in providing factual information on the very nature of nuclear weapons. Such information could include the explosive power of nuclear weapons and the impact on the environment and health of nuclear blast radiation. Given the active efforts of global civil society to try to preserve and communicate this information in a variety of forms, it is necessary for us governments to encourage and suitably assist these efforts. It is our hope that this kind of information will be widely shared among countries, international organizations, civil society, and even future generations.

In order to further promote education and integrate various efforts, it is desirable that we share information on each country's initiatives and their beneficial outcomes, as well as learn from each other's experiences. We will report our efforts and progress during the current NPT review process.

Mr. Chairman,

Lastly, we firmly recognize that disarmament and non-proliferation education is significantly important for making progress toward the full implementation of the disarmament and non-proliferation obligations of the NPT. It is for this reason that we call on all States Parties to participate in the efforts on disarmament and non-proliferation education, and we express our wish for further concrete outcomes in this area.

Thank you for your attention.