

Middle Powers Initiative
Statement OEWG
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A Political/legal framework agreement is needed to create political will in a dual-track approach

Delivered by Tarja Cronberg, Chair of the Middle Powers Initiative

When historians in the future will look at our time, and particularly at the records of this WG, they will wonder about our inaction. This was not a result of lack of knowledge. No, the catastrophic humanitarian consequences were well established and had been debated at three international conferences. Warnings had been issued. A former US defense secretary had even written a book of being on the nuclear brink.

Some of our inaction could be blamed on the nuclear weapon states' absence at this meeting. But the inaction of us, the non-nuclear weapon states, seems to be due to the fact that there are too many alternative ways to go forward. We could not, or would not, choose. They will think, at this critical time, why did they not try everything to prevent a nuclear catastrophe.

Looking at the one of the successful efforts to our time, the Iran deal, we can learn some lessons on how to succeed with a seemingly impossible political project. The Iran deal was a result of two processes. There was political pressure together

with political will, sanctions with diplomacy. The deal was created in a dual-track approach, carrots with sticks.

The proposal of the MPI to this working group deals with the political track. It suggests a framework agreement, political - legal framework agreement, spelling out political goals and combining these with legal procedural commitments. It spells out the existing legal obligations such as the NPT and international law. It includes further political goals as non-binding aims that countries can sign in to, at a different pace if needed. These goals would comprise, in the first phase for example, de-alerting, stockpile reductions and cuts in nuclear spending, combined with legally binding reporting obligations and aspirational time frames for additional measures leading to complete nuclear disarmament.

The content of the agreement would evolve with time as political will and trust is being created. The agreement follows the model of the UN Framework Convention of Climate Change, an agreement where additional measures have been negotiated and the affirmation of specific commitments has taken place at annual conferences. I know nuclear disarmament is not climate change, there are important differences but also similarities. Both threaten our civilization. Both encounter political opposition.

A political -legal framework would appear to provide the best opportunity to engage the nuclear-weapon states and strengthen their commitment to nuclear disarmament, in essence creating- even if only gradually- the political will necessary. The pressure side, the other track, would be taken

care of by a ban treaty/ a convention prohibiting nuclear weapons. Delegitimizing nuclear weapons by this track would provide both public awareness and a momentum to act. A dual-track process would seem to be the best option for the OEWG, that is to recommend and to start multilateral negotiations on both tracks in 2017.