



UNIDIR

UNIDIR OEWG Brief no. 2

**The Treatment of the Issue of
Nuclear Disarmament since the
Open-Ended Working Group
in 2013**

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The United Nations Institute for Disarmament Research (UNIDIR)—an autonomous institute within the United Nations—conducts research on disarmament and security. UNIDIR is based in Geneva, Switzerland, the centre for bilateral and multilateral disarmament and non-proliferation negotiations, and home of the Conference on Disarmament. The Institute explores current issues pertaining to the variety of existing and future armaments, as well as global diplomacy and local tensions and conflicts. Working with researchers, diplomats, government officials, NGOs and other institutions since 1980, UNIDIR acts as a bridge between the research community and governments. UNIDIR's activities are funded by contributions from governments and donor foundations.

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The Treatment of the Issue of Nuclear Disarmament since the Open-Ended Working Group in 2013

This background paper, prepared at the request of the Chair of the 2016 Open-ended Working Group (OEWG), outlines developments in different international processes related to the treatment of nuclear disarmament since 2013. It builds upon an earlier Brief UNIDIR prepared for the OEWG in 2013 entitled 'The Treatment of the Issue of Nuclear Disarmament in Relevant Forums Established by the United Nations'. It should be noted that neither this survey nor its predecessor purports to be a comprehensive account of all proposals or relevant developments on nuclear disarmament. Both briefs are available for download from UNIDIR's website (www.unidir.org).

1. Background

The 2016 Open-ended Working Group is the result of a resolution tabled in the First Committee of the seventieth United Nations General Assembly in October 2015 by Austria, Brazil, Chile, Costa Rica, Ecuador, Georgia, Ghana, Ireland, Kenya, Liechtenstein, Malta, Marshall Islands, Mexico, Nicaragua, Nigeria, Panama, Peru, Philippines, South Africa, Trinidad and Tobago, Uruguay and Venezuela as lead sponsors. That initiative, entitled 'Taking forward multilateral nuclear disarmament negotiations' ([A/C.1/70/L.13/Rev.1](http://www.un.org/News/Press/docs/2015/1510/A/C.1/70/L.13/Rev.1.html)), proposed the establishment of a working group open to participation by all United Nations Member States.

In a vote in the First Committee, the resolution passed by 135 in favour, to 12 against, with 33 abstentions. In the subsequent vote by the General Assembly itself, 138 votes were cast in support of the resolution ([A/RES/70/33](http://www.un.org/News/Press/docs/2015/1510/A/RES/70/33.html)) with 12 against. There were 34 abstentions.

According to [A/RES/70/33](http://www.un.org/News/Press/docs/2015/1510/A/RES/70/33.html), the tasks of the 2016 OEWG are as follows:

- 'to substantively address concrete effective legal measures, legal provisions and norms that will need to be concluded to attain and maintain a world without nuclear weapons' (operative paragraph 2);
- 'the open-ended working group shall also substantively address recommendations on other measures that could contribute to taking forward multilateral nuclear disarmament negotiations, including but not limited to
 - (a) transparency measures related to the risks associated with existing nuclear weapons;
 - (b) measures to reduce and eliminate the risk of accidental, mistaken, unauthorized or intentional nuclear weapon detonations; and

(c) 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' (operative paragraph 3).

As agreed in the resolution, the OEWG will be convened in Geneva in 2016 for up to 15 working days. At its organizational meeting on 28 January 2016, Ambassador Thani Thongphakdi of Thailand was the sole nomination for chairing the OEWG. The group is a subsidiary body of the United Nations General Assembly and will work under the General Assembly's rules of procedure.

The nominated OEWG chair indicated that he intends to organize February's session of the group to cover all aspects of its mandate. Specifically, there will be two panels of experts to initiate discussion: one will focus on the issues in operative paragraph 2, and the other on nuclear transparency, risk and humanitarian consequences issues described in operative paragraph 3.

The 2016 OEWG is required to 'submit a report on its substantive work and agreed recommendations to the General Assembly at its seventy-first session, which will assess progress made, taking into account developments in other relevant forums' (operative paragraph 7).

The 2016 OEWG follows an OEWG in 2013. The earlier OEWG resulted from an October 2012 First Committee resolution also entitled 'Taking forward multilateral disarmament negotiations' ([A/C.1/67/L.46](#); subsequently [A/RES/67/56](#) after a General Assembly vote). Ambassador Manuel B. Dengo of Costa Rica chaired the 2013 OEWG. In line with the resolution, the group submitted a report ([A/68/514](#)) on its work 'reflecting discussions held and proposals made' to the sixty-eighth General Assembly in late 2013 (see also [A/69/154](#) and [Add.1](#) containing views of 28 states on how to take forward multilateral nuclear disarmament negotiations solicited by General Assembly resolution [A/RES/68/46](#)).

2. Nuclear disarmament in the United Nations General Assembly

2.1. First Special Session on Disarmament, the Conference on Disarmament and UN Disarmament Commission

Nuclear disarmament was the subject of the first resolution adopted by the United Nations General Assembly in 1946. In 1978, the first special session of the General Assembly on disarmament (SSOD I) made clear in its consensus resolution that the accumulation of weapons, particularly nuclear weapons, constituted much more of a threat than a protection for mankind. While 'general and complete disarmament under effective international control' was identified as the 'ultimate objective', nuclear disarmament and the prevention of nuclear war was described as the 'highest priority'.

SSOD I established the Committee on Disarmament (the Conference on Disarmament's precursor). At its initial session in 1979, this Committee agreed a list of issues ([A/S/-10/4](#)) for its future work on the cessation of the arms race and disarmament. At the top of this list of ten subjects, often referred to as the 'Decalogue', was 'nuclear weapons in all its aspects'. SSOD I required the Committee (now the Conference) on Disarmament to report annually—or more frequently, as appropriate—to the General Assembly. It also directed the CD to adopt its own agenda, and to operate by consensus.

The evolution of nuclear disarmament-related issues in the CD is covered in Section 2 of UNIDIR's [OEWG Brief no. 1](#). Also described there in more detail is the evolution of the United Nations Disarmament Commission (UNDC). That body was originally created in 1952. United Nations SSOD I decided that the UNDC should be a deliberative body to submit recommendations on disarmament to the General Assembly, and through it, to the CD. In 2015, 'recommendations for

achieving the objective of nuclear disarmament and non-proliferation of nuclear weapons' was one of the two substantive items on UNDC's agenda, the other being 'practical confidence-building measures in the field of conventional weapons' ([A/CN.10/L.74/Rev.1](#)). Since 1999, however, the UNDC has been unable to agree on recommendations to the General Assembly on any issue.

2.2. Resolutions on nuclear disarmament in the First Committee

The First Committee is 'the Disarmament and International Security Committee' of the United Nations General Assembly with a remit extending, in principle, to all questions of this nature. As noted in our previous OEWG Brief, it is not feasible in a paper of this kind to trace the treatment of nuclear disarmament in the First Committee in detail. This section simply offers some brief general remarks about recent developments, rather than in-depth analysis.

States table many resolutions on nuclear disarmament in the First Committee each year, some of which are voted upon. 2015, however, was notable for a marked increase in the number of resolutions directly concerned in some way with nuclear disarmament. Of the fifty-eight resolutions tabled during the 2015 First Committee session, almost half (twenty-eight) dealt in one way or another with nuclear disarmament (one was withdrawn before coming up for decision). In comparison, three years earlier in 2012, resolutions dealing with aspects of nuclear disarmament numbered just under one-third of those tabled. By way of further comparison, in 2005 the proportion was the same—just under one-third.

Likely reasons for the increased prominence of nuclear disarmament include the inability of the five-yearly review conference of the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty (NPT) in May 2015 to agree on an outcome, and the increasing concern of many states about perceived lack of multilateral progress on nuclear disarmament as expressed through the so-called humanitarian initiative (see below).

Six new First Committee resolutions concerned with nuclear disarmament were tabled in 2015:

- **Taking forward multilateral nuclear disarmament negotiations**

[A/C.1/70/L.13/Rev.1](#) ([A/RES/70/33](#))

Lead sponsors: Austria, Brazil, Chile, Costa Rica, Ecuador, Georgia, Ghana, Ireland, Kenya, Liechtenstein, Malta, Marshall Islands, Mexico, Nicaragua, Nigeria, Panama, Peru, Philippines, South Africa, Trinidad and Tobago, Uruguay and Venezuela (Bolivarian Republic of)

Voting result in First Committee as a whole: 135 (for) -12 (against) -33 (abstaining); Voting result in the General Assembly as a whole: 138-12-34

- **Effective measures on nuclear disarmament**

[A/C.1/70/L.28/Rev.1](#) (withdrawn)

Lead sponsor: Islamic Republic of Iran

- **Humanitarian consequences of nuclear weapons**

[A/C.1/70/L.37](#) ([A/RES/70/47](#))

Lead sponsors: Antigua and Barbuda, Austria, Azerbaijan, Belize, Benin, Brazil, Burundi, Cabo Verde, Chad, Chile, Colombia, Costa Rica, Côte d'Ivoire, Ecuador, Egypt, Ghana, Grenada, Guatemala, Indonesia, Ireland, Jamaica, Kazakhstan, Kenya, Kyrgyzstan, Lesotho, Liberia, Libya, Liechtenstein, Madagascar, Malaysia, Malta, Marshall Islands, Mexico, Mongolia, Montenegro, New Zealand, Nicaragua, Nigeria, Panama, Papua New Guinea, Peru, Philippines, Qatar, San Marino, Senegal, Serbia, South Africa, Sweden, Switzerland,

Thailand, Trinidad and Tobago, Tunisia, United Arab Emirates, Uruguay, Vanuatu and Viet Nam

Voting result in First Committee as a whole: 136-18-21

Voting result in the General Assembly as a whole: 144-18-22

- **Humanitarian pledge for the prohibition and elimination of nuclear weapons**

[A/C.1/70/L.38](#) ([A/RES/70/48](#))

Lead sponsors: Antigua and Barbuda, Austria, Belize, Benin, Burundi, Cabo Verde, Chad, Chile, Colombia, Côte d'Ivoire, Ecuador, Ghana, Grenada, Guatemala, Indonesia, Ireland, Jamaica, Kazakhstan, Kenya, Lesotho, Liberia, Libya, Liechtenstein, Madagascar, Malta, Marshall Islands, Mexico, Mongolia, Nicaragua, Nigeria, Panama, Papua New Guinea, Peru, Philippines, San Marino, Senegal, South Africa, Thailand, Trinidad and Tobago, Tunisia, Uruguay, Vanuatu and Viet Nam

Voting result in First Committee as a whole: 128-29-18

Voting result in the General Assembly as a whole: 139-29-17

- **Ethical imperatives for a nuclear-weapon-free world**

[A/C.1/70/L.40](#) ([A/RES/70/50](#))

Lead sponsors: Austria, Costa Rica, Ecuador, Ghana, Iran (Islamic Republic of), Ireland, Liberia, Malawi, Marshall Islands, Mexico, Namibia, Nigeria, Philippines, Somalia, South Africa, Trinidad and Tobago, Uganda and Zambia

Voting result in First Committee as a whole: 124-35-15

Voting result in the General Assembly as a whole: 132-36-16

- **Universal Declaration on the Achievement of a Nuclear-Weapon-Free World**

[A/C.1/70/L.52/Rev.1](#) ([A/RES/70/57](#))

Lead sponsor: Kazakhstan

Voting result in First Committee as a whole: 131-22-28

Voting result in the General Assembly as a whole: 133-23-28

The most complete proposal on nuclear disarmament yet to be introduced in the United Nations is a '**Model Nuclear Weapons Convention**'. The initial version of that draft instrument was tabled in the General Assembly by Costa Rica and Malaysia as a discussion document in 1997 (A/C.1/52/7). Costa Rica and Malaysia submitted an updated draft ([A/62/650](#)) on 18 January 2008 that was circulated to Member States by the United Nations Secretary-General. The proposal was also tabled in the NPT (see [NPT/CONF.2010/PC.I/WP.17](#)) and the 2013 OEWG ([A/AC.281/WP.7](#)). It envisages framing obligations not only to prohibit the development, testing, production, stockpiling, transfer, use, and threat of use of nuclear weapons but also to ensure their elimination, all contained in the one instrument. States possessing nuclear weapons would commit to destroying their nuclear arsenals in a phased manner. These phases would unfold as follows:

- taking nuclear weapons off alert,
- removing weapons from deployment,
- removing nuclear warheads from their delivery vehicles,
- disabling the warheads,
- removing the triggers (or pits), and
- placing the fissile material under international control.

Under the model convention, delivery vehicles would also have to be destroyed or converted to a non-nuclear capability. In addition, the convention would prohibit the production of weapons-usable fissile material.

The draft model convention has yet to be the subject of negotiations, although references have been made to it in the General Assembly, CD, UNDC, NPT (including in the 2010 Action Plan), and in the United Nations Secretary-General's five point plan.

2.3. The 2013 High-Level Meeting

The United Nations General Assembly High-Level Meeting on Nuclear Disarmament was convened on 26 September 2013 in accordance with resolution 67/39 of 3 December 2012. It was the result of an initiative of the Movement of Non-Aligned Countries (NAM).

The High-Level Meeting complemented other resolutions expressing frustration at the absence of substantial progress in nuclear disarmament (including the one leading to establishment of the 2013 OEWG), and the continued stalemate in the CD. The High-Level Meeting's objective was to create new momentum toward nuclear disarmament by drawing the world's attention to the issue and mobilizing the international community, including civil society organizations. Seventy-four heads of state and 48 ministers delivered statements in support of nuclear disarmament, as well as five heads of international organizations and two representatives of civil society.

Many states speaking at the High-Level Meeting called for the convening of a high-level conference in 2018 to review progress achieved on nuclear disarmament. These States, predominantly from the NAM, thought that this conference could identify ways and methods to eliminate nuclear weapons with the briefest possible delay, through agreeing on a phased programme for the complete elimination of nuclear weapons within a specific time frame in order to ban the development, production, acquisition, testing, stockpiling, transfer, use or threat of use of nuclear weapons and provide for their destruction ([A/68/563](#)). Resolution [A/68/32](#) adopted by the General Assembly on 5 December 2013 decided 'to convene, no later than 2018, a United Nations high-level international conference on nuclear disarmament to review the progress made in this regard' among its aims.

3. The United Nations Secretary-General

Ban Ki-moon said in October 2008 that one of his priorities, as Secretary-General, was to promote global goods and remedies to challenges that do not respect borders. A world free of nuclear weapons would, in his view, be a global public good of the highest order. He put forward his five-point plan to that end (outlined in Section 4 of UNIDIR's [OEWG Brief no. 1](#)).

The Secretary-General and his representatives have repeatedly confirmed his commitment to this goal, and Mr. Ban reiterated his concern in fora including the General Assembly, the NPT review conference in 2015, and the CD, about the lack of progress of the international community toward achieving it. At the Vienna conference on the humanitarian impacts of nuclear weapons in December 2014, the Secretary-General added that he hoped states would act 'with new resolve to pursue effective measures for the achievement of nuclear disarmament.' In his latest statement on nuclear disarmament—delivered on his behalf by Mr. Kim Won-soo, his acting High Representative—the Secretary-General noted that:

This month [January, 2016] marks the seventieth anniversary of the first resolution adopted by the General Assembly. That resolution sought specific measures for the elimination of atomic weapons and all other weapons adaptable to mass destruction. Despite some progress, that objective remains unfulfilled.

4. The Nuclear Non-proliferation Treaty

As described by the United Nations Office for Disarmament Affairs, the NPT is a landmark international treaty aimed at preventing the spread of nuclear weapons and weapons technology, promoting cooperation in the peaceful uses of nuclear energy and furthering the goal of achieving nuclear disarmament and general and complete disarmament. (These are often described as the three ‘pillars’ of the NPT regime).

The NPT represents the only binding commitment in a multilateral treaty to the goal of disarmament by nuclear-weapon states. Opened for signature in 1968, the NPT entered into force in 1970. On 11 May 1995, the Treaty was extended indefinitely. A total of 190 parties have joined, including five nuclear-armed states (referred to as the nuclear-weapon states: China, France, the Russian Federation, United Kingdom and United States). More countries have ratified the NPT than any other arms limitation and disarmament agreement, a testament to the Treaty’s significance. However, four nuclear-armed states (Democratic People’s Republic of Korea (DPRK), India, Israel and Pakistan) do not—or in the case of the DPRK no longer—subscribe to the NPT.

As outlined in the previous UNIDIR [OEWG Brief](#), the 2010 Review Conference succeeded in achieving a consensus final outcome. In contrast, the 2015 NPT Review Conference failed to reach agreement on the draft Final Document, when Canada, the United Kingdom and the United States declined to join a consensus for reasons related to the issue of a WMD-free zone in the Middle East.

One noteworthy contribution to the debate on nuclear disarmament during the 2015 NPT review meeting preparatory cycle was that presented by the New Agenda Coalition (NAC) countries (Brazil, Egypt, Ireland, Mexico, New Zealand and South Africa). Options that the NAC countries had contributed to the 2013 OEWG (consisting of work in the context of ‘a comprehensive treaty dealing with nuclear disarmament, or a framework agreement under which other instruments would be elaborated’ ([A/AC.281/WP.10](#))), were narrowed during the following two years to the point where the Coalition saw the choice as being between two distinct legal approaches—‘a standalone agreement, whether a comprehensive convention or a ban treaty’ on the one hand, and a framework agreement of ‘mutually-supporting instruments’ on the other (see [NPT/CONF.2015/WP.9](#)). The NPT Review Conference’s limited discussions on effective measures, however, were inconclusive and, as noted earlier, no agreed outcome was achieved.

Another new element of the NPT dynamic in 2015 was that of the so-called humanitarian initiative (described in section 8 below). A humanitarian pledge introduced by Austria at the conclusion of the Vienna conference on the humanitarian impacts of nuclear weapons in December 2014 to ‘to fill the legal gap for the prohibition and elimination of nuclear weapons’ attracted a widening group of adherents. As the 2015 NPT conference closed, Austria, on behalf of a group of 49 states, stated that ‘the fact that credible progress could not be achieved and the humanitarian imperative only underscore that we must continue with urgency in our efforts’.

On the other hand, some of the nuclear-weapon states and their allies disagreed that there is a legal gap to be filled, and argued that the existing ‘step-by-step’ approach to nuclear disarmament pursued in the NPT and the CD continues to be the only realistic course open to the international community. It should be noted in the context of ‘step-by-step’ that a similar approach—‘building blocks’—was the subject of a working paper ([A/AC.281/WP.4](#)) tabled in the 2013 OEWG by a group of 12 states (Australia, Belgium, Canada, Finland, Germany, Italy, Japan, Netherlands, Poland, Portugal, Slovakia and Sweden).

5. The Conference on Disarmament

The last nuclear disarmament-related instrument to be negotiated in the CD was the Comprehensive Test Ban Treaty between 1993 and 1996. As described in UNIDIR's OEWG Brief no. 1, efforts since then to get negotiations underway in the CD on further aspects of nuclear disarmament or the other 'core' issues of the Conference (prohibiting the production of fissile material for weapons-use, preventing an arms race in outer space, and negative security assurances) have been unavailing due to that forum's inability to reach consensus on a programme of work for advancing any of those matters.

In 2013, UNIDIR wrote that the CD's preoccupation with trying to agree a basis for detailed work on nuclear disarmament and other core issues has meant that only cursory attention has been directed to substance. This remains the case although the Conference has continued to hold some debates on nuclear disarmament in recent years. These are reflected in the *procès verbal* of the CD, which may be accessed through the [website](#) of the Office for Disarmament Affairs in Geneva. The debates are also summarized briefly in recent annual reports ([CD/1963](#), [CD/2004](#), [CD/2046](#)).

6. The United Nations Security Council and the 1540 Committee

The United Nations Security Council has been preoccupied over the last decade with matters of nuclear non-proliferation. These important matters of global security matters are covered elsewhere. The Security Council's 1540 Committee, however, is worth special note. In 2004, the Security Council unanimously adopted resolution 1540, under Chapter VII of the Charter of the United Nations. This resolution obliges states to refrain from supporting non-state actors from developing, acquiring, manufacturing, possessing, transporting, transferring or using nuclear, chemical or biological weapons and their delivery systems. It imposes binding obligations on all states to adopt legislation to prevent the proliferation of weapons of mass destruction (WMD) including nuclear weapons, and their means of delivery, and to establish appropriate domestic controls over related materials to prevent their illicit trafficking. It also encourages enhanced international cooperation on such efforts.

Resolution 1540 affirms support for the multilateral treaties whose aim is to eliminate or prevent the proliferation of WMD and the importance for all States to implement them fully. Notably, it reiterates that none of the obligations of resolution 1540 shall conflict with or alter the rights and obligations of NPT state parties, or alter the IAEA's responsibilities.

The resolution also established a Committee, which has a mandate that has been extended repeatedly by the Security Council. The Committee is due to submit a comprehensive review of resolution 1540 to the Security Council before December 2016. This is seen as

a vital milestone in the history of the resolution. Underpinning all of the activities described below, in 2015 the Committee should develop a plan that will identify the objectives, scope, timing, and participants of this process by mid-2015. This should include consideration of any extraordinary meetings that might be required to coordinate these activities. Where appropriate, the Committee and its experts might draw on outside expertise to assist in these efforts, including the support of the Office for Disarmament Affairs and other United Nations bodies' ([S/2015/75](#)).

7. UNIDIR

The United Nations Institute for Disarmament Research (UNIDIR) works on the basis of the provisions of the Final Document of the First Special Session of the General Assembly devoted to Disarmament and also takes into account relevant General Assembly recommendations. Following a proposal by France at SSOD I, UNIDIR was established by the General Assembly as a voluntarily funded component of the UN's Disarmament Machinery.

Nuclear disarmament is at the centre of UNIDIR's mandate which requires the Institute to 'aim at':

- (a) Providing the international community with more diversified and complete data on problems relating to international security, the armaments race and disarmament in all fields, particularly in the nuclear field, so as to facilitate progress, through negotiations, towards greater security for all States and towards the economic and social development of all peoples;
- (b) Promoting informed participation by all States in disarmament efforts;
- (c) Assisting ongoing negotiations on disarmament and continuing efforts to ensure greater international security at a progressively lower level of armaments, particularly nuclear armaments, by means of objective and factual studies and analyses;
- (d) Carrying out more in-depth, forward-looking and long-term research on disarmament, so as to provide a general insight into the problems involved, and stimulating new initiatives for new negotiations.

UNIDIR's expertise on nuclear disarmament issues spans a range of areas, including **technical issues**, such as supporting discussions on fissile materials; aiding the UN's **Disarmament Machinery**, such as assisting ongoing negotiations as well as efforts to help the CD to restart substantive work; and producing studies and analyses to stimulate **new initiatives**. Please see the Annex for a sampling of recent UNIDIR analyses on nuclear disarmament.

8. The 'humanitarian initiative'

The 2010 NPT Review Conference's Final Document noted 'the catastrophic humanitarian consequences of any use of nuclear weapons' and reaffirmed 'the need for all States at all times to comply with applicable international law, including international humanitarian law' ([NPT/CONF.2010/50 \(Vol. I\), part I](#)). This language was significant for two main reasons. First, although humanitarian consequences are referred to in the NPT's Preamble, that consideration had not previously been the subject of an expression of deep concern in an agreed final document of a five-yearly review of the treaty. Second, the 2010 NPT Review Conference reference resulted in several initiatives to draw further attention to the humanitarian consequences of nuclear weapons—actions that are sometimes described collectively as the humanitarian initiative.

Notable among those initiatives was a conference hosted by Norway in Oslo in March 2013 to explore the humanitarian consequences of nuclear weapons. Although the five NPT nuclear-weapon-states decided not to attend the Oslo Conference, 128 countries participated, as did several United Nations organizations and the International Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement. Mexico hosted a second conference in Nayarit in February 2014 (attended by 146 states), and in December 2014 the Austrian government hosted a third in Vienna (attended by 158 states). The United Kingdom and the United States participated in the Vienna conference. Two other nuclear-armed states, India and Pakistan, attended all three meetings.

Since UNIDIR's last OEWG Brief in 2013, this 'humanitarian initiative' has broadened the overall scope of the diplomatic debate on nuclear weapons, which had traditionally been dominated by technical considerations and notions centred on 'strategic stability'. Not without controversy, the initiative has resulted in a greater focus in the nuclear disarmament debate on the evidence of impacts of nuclear weapons and the unacceptable humanitarian consequences of nuclear warfare. In turn, descriptions and evidence of the humanitarian hazards posed by the use of nuclear weapons has served to sharpen the question of how best to develop effective measures for making progress towards nuclear disarmament.

Although not an official output of the Vienna conference, Austria announced its own national pledge at the conclusion of that international meeting. The Austrian government invited other states to join its pledge—to date, 122 states have done so. This 'humanitarian pledge' calls on 'all states parties to the NPT to renew their commitment to the urgent and full implementation of existing obligations under Article VI, and to this end, to identify and pursue effective measures to fill the legal gap for the prohibition and elimination of nuclear weapons and [to] pledge to cooperate with all stakeholders to achieve this goal'. The pledge was formally tabled by Austria in the CD on 28 August 2015 ([CD/2039](#)).

The meaning of the language in the humanitarian pledge has given rise to differing interpretations, ranging from a commitment to fulfil obligations already contained in the NPT to a call for a process towards an international nuclear weapons prohibition.

Annex: Further UN Resources

Open-ended Working Group

[Open-ended Working Group 2016](#)

[Open-ended Working Group 2013](#)

[Taking forward multilateral nuclear disarmament negotiations](#) (Report of the Secretary-General, 2014)

[Additional responses by states available here.](#)

[OEWG Briefing Paper no. 1](#) (2013)

The Conference on Disarmament

[Conference on Disarmament](#), including records of Meetings by year, including PVs

[CD Documents on core issues: nuclear disarmament](#)

Relevant [Disarmament Insight blog](#) posts

On Conference on Disarmament (27 August 2015) (10 March 2015) (2 June 2014 – see 3 posts) (22 August 2013) (10 July 2013) (15 June 2013) (15 May 2013 – see 2 posts) and (20 February 2013).

[The Conference on Disarmament: Issues and Insights](#) (2012)

[Breaking the Ice in the Conference on Disarmament: A Wrap-up](#) (2011)

[New Types and Systems of WMD: Consideration by the CD](#) (2011)

[Transparency in Armaments: Consideration of the Item in the CD](#) (2011)

[Comprehensive Programme of Disarmament: Consideration of the Item by the CD](#) (2011)

[Transforming the Conference on Disarmament: Multilateral Arms Control and Disarmament for a Pluralistic World](#) (2011)

[The Conference on Disarmament and the Prevention of an Arms Race in Outer Space](#) (2011)

[The Conference on Disarmament and Negative Security Assurances](#) (2011)

[The Conference on Disarmament and Engagement with Civil Society](#) (2011)

[Civil Society and the Conference on Disarmament](#) (2011)

[Fissile Material Negotiations in the Conference on Disarmament](#) (version 2, updated February 2011)

[Nuclear Disarmament in the Conference on Disarmament](#) (2011)

[The Conference on Disarmament: Breaking the Ice](#) (2010)

[Getting the Conference on Disarmament Back to Substantive Work: Food for Thought](#) (2009)

High-Level Meeting on Nuclear Disarmament

[Statements of the High-Level Meeting](#)

[The United Nations General Assembly High-Level Meeting on Nuclear Disarmament](#) (2013)

UN Disarmament Machinery

[Disarmament Machinery: A Fresh Approach](#) (2010)

NPT

NPT Review Conferences and Preparatory Committees ([UN Office for Disarmament Affairs](#))

Relevant Effective Measures blogs ([combined UNIDIR—ILPI site](#))

Effective measures “[Royal Flush](#)” (20 November 2015)

NPT papers series (2015):

[The humanitarian initiative in 2015](#)

[On the ethics of nuclear weapons](#)

[Analysing effective measures: options for multilateral nuclear disarmament and implementation of NPT article VI](#)

[On builders and blockers: states have different roles to play to complete the nuclear disarmament puzzle](#)

[NPT success and the humanitarian initiative](#)

[The IAEA Additional Protocol after the 2010 NPT Review—Status and Prospects](#) (2013)

[World Nuclear Industry: Renaissance or Decline?](#) (2012)

[Prospects for Nuclear Power in the Middle East after Fukushima and the Arab Spring](#) (2012)

[The NTI Nuclear Materials Security Index](#) (2012)

[Challenges of Protecting US Nuclear Weapon Materials](#) (2012)

[Universalization of Comprehensive Safeguards—Next Steps](#) (2012)

[Disposition of Excess Russian Weapon HEU and Plutonium](#) (2012)

[Disposition of Excess Military Nuclear Material](#) (2012)

[Transparency in the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Regime](#) (2012)

[Practical Steps towards Transparency of Nuclear Arsenals](#) (2012)

FMCT

[CD Documents on core issues: Fissile Materials](#)

[A Fissile Material Cut-off Treaty: Understanding the Critical Issues](#) (2010)

[Fissile Material Negotiations in the Conference on Disarmament](#) (version 2, updated February 2011)

[Treatment of Pre-existing Fissile Material Stocks in an FM\(C\)T](#) (2010)

[A Treaty on Fissile Materials: Just a Cut-off or More?](#) (2010)

CTBT

[Unfinished Business: the Negotiation of the CTBT and the End of Nuclear Testing](#) (2009)

UN Security Council Resolution 1540

[UN Security Council Resolution 1540 background](#)

[Implementing Resolution 1540: the Role of Regional Organizations](#) (2008)

Humanitarian Impact of Nuclear Weapons

UNIDIR & International Law and Policy Institute:

[A prohibition on nuclear weapons: a guide to the issues](#) (2016)

[Effective Measures blog](#) (effectivemeasures.org)

Vienna papers series (2014):

[The story so far: the humanitarian initiative on the impacts of nuclear weapons](#)

[A harmful legacy: the lingering humanitarian impacts of nuclear weapons testing](#)

[A limit to safety: risk, 'normal accidents', and nuclear weapons](#)

[Population displacement: displacement in the aftermath of nuclear weapon detonation events](#)

[Gendered impacts: the humanitarian impacts of nuclear weapons from a gender perspective](#)

[Legal aspects of nuclear weapons: a 'birds-eye view' of international law and nuclear weapons](#)

[An Illusion of Safety: Challenges of Nuclear Weapon Detonations for United Nations Humanitarian Coordination and Response](#) (2014)

[Viewing Nuclear Weapons through a Humanitarian Lens: Context and Implications](#) (2013)

[Humanitarian Impacts of Nuclear Weapons: Tracing Notions about Catastrophic Humanitarian Consequences](#) (2013)

Transparency and Accountability in Nuclear Disarmament

[A New START Model for Transparency in Nuclear Disarmament](#) (2013)

[A New START Model for Transparency in Nuclear Disarmament: Individual Country Reports](#) (2013)

[Transparency in Nuclear Disarmament](#) (2012)

[Reducing Alert Rates of Nuclear Weapons](#) (2012)

Nuclear Security

[Global Nuclear Security: Building Greater Accountability and Cooperation](#) (2011)

Multilateral Approaches to the Nuclear Fuel Cycle

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