

Remarks
by
H.E. Mr. Thani Thongphakdi
Ambassador and Permanent Representative of Thailand
at the Organizational Meeting of the
Open-ended Working Group
Taking Forward Multilateral Nuclear Disarmament Negotiations
Thursday 28 January 2016, Palais des Nations, Geneva

Excellencies,
Distinguished delegates,

I take this opportunity to thank all of you for my nomination. I am humbled by the trust and confidence that you have placed in me. I wish to assure you that I will do my best to guide the work of this group in an open, transparent and inclusive manner to a successful conclusion.

Let me share with you some preliminary ideas on how I intend to proceed.

First, pursuant to resolution 70/33, the group is open for the participation of all States, the relevant international organizations and civil society, as per the established practice. I was informed by the secretariat that the relevant invitations have already been circulated both in New York and Geneva earlier this month. I therefore encourage all to take part actively.

Against this background - as already stated - I intend to chair it in an open, comprehensive, transparent and inclusive manner. I will consult intensively with all delegations, and intend – for the sake of those States which have no missions in Geneva - to find a way to periodically inform the missions in New York and also seek the contributions of countries which cannot physically participate in our deliberations.

Second, the mandate of the group is straightforward and – as already advised by Ms Soliman – is contained in resolution 70/33. We are requested to address concrete effective legal measures, provisions and norms, as well as recommendations on other measures that could contribute to taking forward multilateral nuclear disarmament negotiations. I am eager to listen to all ideas and proposals and I want to assure you that they will all be considered during the substantive meetings of the group.

Third, a draft provisional agenda was circulated in the room. You will notice that this is a very straightforward agenda and it is aimed at providing the maximum degree of flexibility. The Provisional agenda contains one substantive agenda item, namely agenda item 5 entitled “Taking forward multilateral nuclear disarmament negotiations”.

This agenda item has two sub-items the language of which is taken directly from the mandate of the group, as contained in OP2 and OP3 of resolution 70/33. A self-explanatory agenda item 6 was also included which refers to the consideration and adoption of the report of the group to the General Assembly, as per OP 7 of GA resolution 70/33.

Fourth, we will try to schedule the meetings of the group in the most effective manner, bearing in mind that this is a very busy year for Geneva, in general, and for the disarmament community, in particular, with the annual session of the CD, the meetings of the treaty regimes, including two review conferences (BWC and CCW), as well as the first and the extraordinary meetings of the ATT.

Following consultations, we have been informed that the following dates are available for the group to meet:

- A total of 8 plenary meetings during the week of 22 February, namely two plenary session per day on February 22, 25 and 26 and only one afternoon session per day on February 23 and 24 (Tuesday and Wednesday) when traditionally the CD plenary as well as the regional group meetings take place. This calendar can be reviewed should there be more CD meetings during that week;

- 16 plenary meetings during 2 to 4 May and 9 to 13 May. As Thursday, 5 May is an official day off for Geneva (Ascension Day), at this stage we are not planning formal meetings for both Thursday and Friday, 5 and 6 May as it is expected that many colleagues may take this day off.
- Finally, three days during the week of 22 August, but this arrangement remains subject to further consultations depending on the progress the group will make.

This calendar is indicative and will be adjusted depending on the progress made by the open-ended working group and taking into consideration the work of the CD.

In order to better structure the debates and help you better prepare for the discussions on the different topics as well, I will develop a timetable that will allow the Open-ended working group to cover in an appropriate manner the most important elements related to nuclear disarmament that need to be considered in the given time.

This indicative timetable will be circulated as soon as possible and will be available on the website of the group so please check it periodically for any possible change.

Fifth, in terms of substance, I see the first session in February primarily as the place to set the scene and frame our deliberations. Therefore, after dispensing with procedural matters, I intend to start with a few presentations about the outcome of the OEWG in 2013 and what has transpired since, including recent developments regarding nuclear disarmament issues which will bring us up to date. This will provide us with a good understanding of the issues and challenges that we will have to address in order to be able to consider them and produce a good result.

After that, I hope to engage in an interactive dialogue and brainstorming on how to address the existing challenges with the view of developing proposals and recommendations on how to take forward multilateral nuclear disarmament negotiations. I envisage this to be done by way of two panel discussions, one focusing on our mandate in OP2 and the other on OP3.

At this juncture, let me also encourage the submission of working papers which will help inform our discussions.

Based on the results of this first session, I will try to combine together and synthesize all ideas expressed in a background paper that will serve as the basis for the discussions in May.

The second set of meetings in May will be our main session where the various proposals will have to be considered and developed and would like to invite you all to participate actively in it.

Finally, we will meet for three more days in August to discuss and adopt the final report of the group to the General Assembly as per its mandate.

It is of course my hope that we will make our best endeavours to reach general agreement so that the report and recommendations can be adopted by consensus.

These are my preliminary ideas of how to proceed but would like to be as inclusive as possible. Consequently, my doors stand open to all of you who would wish to come and consult on the work of the group or to come with some specific ideas.

I look forward to your support and cooperation to advance the objectives of the Open-ended working group.

Thank you.
