

71st Session UNGA First Committee

Side-event

“Multilateral negotiations on nuclear disarmament – ways forward”

18 October 2016, 13.15 – 14.30 hrs,

Conference Room 7, UN Headquarters, New York

Excellencies,
Distinguished participants,
Colleagues and friends,

1. Thank you for joining us today. It is my great pleasure and honour to welcome you to the Panel Discussion on “Multilateral negotiations on nuclear disarmament – ways forward”, organized by the Permanent Missions of Indonesia, Malaysia, the Philippines, and Viet Nam and my own country, Thailand together with the UN Institute for Disarmament Research
2. Almost a year ago today, the United Nations General Assembly adopted resolution 70/33, setting up an open-ended working group on taking forward multilateral nuclear disarmament negotiations. Under the chairmanship of Ambassador Thani Thongpakdi, the Thai Permanent Representative in Geneva, the working group was convened in February and concluded its work in August this year. It was open to participation by all Member States, with contributions from international organizations and civil society. Real and meaningful discussion took place, providing a new momentum in the multilateral nuclear disarmament process. In its report, the Working Group recommends “with wide spread support” for the General Assembly to convene a conference in 2017, open to all States with the participation and contribution of International Organizations and civil society, to negotiate a legally binding instrument to prohibit nuclear weapons, leading toward their total elimination.
3. This Open-ended Working Group was a unique process. It was held outside the realm of the Conference on Disarmament, which to a certain extent allowed flexibility in the discussions and enabled wide ranging views to be shared in an inclusive and transparent manner. As other universally-accepted disarmament instruments such as the Ottawa Convention have shown, transparency and inclusivity are indeed fundamental for finding a way forward. I am confident that this will also be the case when we continue our discussion on nuclear weapons here at the UNHQ in New York City, with our collective security and the Working Group’s recommendation in mind.
4. This is precisely the objective of our side event today – the way forward. With the expertise and experiences of our distinguished panelists and our moderator, Dr. John Borrie, Chief of Research at UNIDIR, discussion will certainly provide insights and recommendations that should be useful in examining how to carry on the work of the Working Group in the New York context.

5. Before we proceed to hear from our distinguished panelists, I have to honour to invite Mr. Thomas Markram, Director and Deputy to the High Representative for Disarmament Affairs to deliver his remarks.
6. Thank you very much.
