



**Open Ended Working Group on “Taking forward multilateral nuclear disarmament negotiations”
Statement Delivered by Esteban Ramírez González
UN Representative
Geneva, 17 May 2013**

Gracias Sr. Presidente,

De antemano, Alcaldes por la Paz quisiera agradecer a los panelistas y a las delegaciones que han participado a lo largo de estas interesantes discusiones. Nos motiva enormemente escuchar las numerosas referencias a la necesidad de nuevas ideas y enfoques para llevar adelante esfuerzos en materia de desarme nuclear.

Esperamos que este grupo de trabajo constituya el comienzo de un importante ejercicio que permita especificar los desafíos inmediatos y de largo plazo; así como una discusión abierta sobre los diferentes marcos y procesos posibles que permitirían abordar dichos desafíos.

Sólo una discusión abierta y creativa, en un espíritu de buena fe, será capaz de revitalizar esfuerzos multilaterales que permitan desarrollar pasos concretos, progresivos, pero certeros, hasta alcanzar la eliminación de las armas nucleares.

Mr. Chairman,

With your indulgence, I would like to make some brief remarks on some the different areas that have been addressed in the panels during this week.

We welcome the interventions that have emphasised a common aspiration for total nuclear disarmament.

While, as some have stressed, the goal seems to be *crystal clear* –we believe that it certainly remains a challenge to ensure that this goal guides efforts towards concrete achievements and provides a coherent framework for future endeavours.

The discussion on NWFZs illustrated this combination of *continuous process* and *aspiration*. Echoing the remarks by Amb. Gioconda Ubeda, we believe that behind NWFZs stand two key elements that are fundamental for the broader goal of establishing a NFWF: the institutional and security architecture required to free space of nuclear weapons; as well as a clear, unwavering, political commitment towards disarmament.

In this context, we welcome the continuous engagement of Latin American and Caribbean states in order to achieve progress in nuclear disarmament and non-proliferation, made evident in the Santiago Declaration and reaffirmed in the Caracas Summit.

This collective determination to move towards security arrangements that exclude the use and the threat of use of nuclear weapons also evidences the long process and multiple instruments and institutional architectures through which these objectives can be achieved.

On Wednesday, Mr. Aaron Tovish suggested that “‘**planning in good faith**’ should be our core guiding concept at this time.’ The panel discussion on “other initiatives and proposals” has provided some depth for this claim.

After years in which different proposals for plans and road maps have accumulated but failed to gather enough momentum, including the UN SG’s five-point proposal; what is lacking is not a “definitive plan”, but the determination to specify concrete priorities and the openness to address the different ways in which these so-called “building blocks” or “steps” can be brought together –which needs not be a sequential process.

This can only be a continuous process and, as such, constant and open engagement will be required.

In conclusion, Mr. Chairman,

Throughout this week, the panels on “taking stock” have raised a number of questions about both *fundamental elements* and *processes* necessary for achieving progress in nuclear disarmament.

We hope that the working group will continue to motivate delegations to interact in an open exchange of ideas and will challenge them to venture off the beaten track.

As the working group moves towards the fulfilment of its mandate, that is, “developing proposals,” on the basis of this inventory, we believe that the group could benefit from an emphasis on the nature of the “steps” or “building blocks” needed; and on the different frameworks or ways in which these building blocks can be pursued as part of a clear international commitment towards total disarmament.

The frustration with the status quo and the failure to build on existing instruments is patent.

In fact, this working group constitutes a response to the current state of affairs; but it also constitutes a basis that could provide a constructive reassessment of the different tools and challenges, *conceptual*, *substantive* and *procedural*, which lay ahead. As such, avoiding the deepening of divisions is paramount.

Changing dominant perceptions about nuclear weapons and about the urgency and imperative need for disarmament constitutes a fundamental challenge. In the long term, translating the common aspiration for a NWFV into a concrete set of actions and commitments will be necessary.

Civil society stands ready to be your partner in this undertaking.

A sustained, credible, and international effort to eliminate nuclear weapons will be required in order to galvanise public support in both nuclear and non-nuclear weapon states.

We are all pulling in the same direction, bringing useful ideas and skills to bear on the challenge of disarmament. The working group is an opportunity to build up confidence and, as such, it should also leave the door open for those who are not yet present.

Thank you, Mr Chairman.