

Efforts towards a world free of nuclear weapons

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Minister, Mayor, Excellencies, Ladies and Gentlemen,

It is a privilege to have the opportunity to address this important conference. It is an honour to be able to share with you the Norwegian perspectives on how to reach our common vision of a world free of nuclear weapons here in Japan.

Japan has for several decades been leader and a champion in promoting nuclear disarmament. It has inspired governments as well as the civil society. Japan has for years been the main sponsor on a key resolution in the UN General Assembly outlining key steps to be taken to achieve elimination of nuclear arms. Norway is pleased to be a co-sponsor of the Japanese resolution. This resolution mobilises broad support. If only the measures proposed in that resolution had been implemented, we would be much closer to a world free of nuclear arms.

If we are to make progress, we must firstly agree on where we should be heading. That may unfortunately not necessarily be the case.

Restoring the vision

The long-term goal of the NPT is full elimination of nuclear weapons. It will be difficult and take time, but it is essential that we do not lose sight of this vision.

During the Cold War few believed it would be possible to achieve total elimination of nuclear weapons. An argument frequently used was that nuclear weapons could not be dis-invented. Yet, the 1990s clearly demonstrated that it was possible to ban certain categories of weapons (i.e. chemical weapons and anti-personnel mines) and there seemed to be growing consensus on steps to remove the possibility for a new nuclear arms race and moving towards full nuclear disarmament. The prospect of total elimination of nuclear weapons was seen as a pre-condition for the indefinite extension of the NPT in 1995.

Since the historic NPT Review Conference in 2000, the hopeful development has been halted and even reversed. For a number of years, few of the nuclear weapons states spoke about the vision of total elimination of nuclear weapons. There was a growing fear that the division between the few states that have nuclear weapons and the vast majority that do not would become permanent. That would in the long-run undermine the sustainability of the entire non-proliferation regime.

In recent years there has been a renewed interest for nuclear disarmament. The two op-eds by former US statesmen in the Wall Street Journal have greatly contributed to the restoration of the vision of a world free of nuclear weapons. The speech given by the former UK foreign secretary Margaret Beckett at the Carnegie Conference in June 2007 was also significant in advocating this ambition. Most nuclear weapons states have referred to the long-term aim of eliminating nuclear weapons in the Preparatory Process to the NPT 2010 Review Conference.

While the Wall Street Journal op-eds have been important, we should not underestimate other factors. Firstly, States Parties to the NPT have become more assertive on the need to speed up

the disarmament process. The adoption in the UN General Assembly of nuclear weapons resolutions tabled by Japan and the New Agenda Coalition with large majorities illustrates this point. Secondly, nuclear disarmament has strong support in all regional groupings of the NPT. This is illustrated by the support of the Seven Nation Initiative. Thirdly, although we are far from the mass mobilisation which took place in Europe and North America in the 1970s and 1980s, civil society has increasingly become more vocal on nuclear issues. The campaign Mayors for Peace is an example of this increased engagement.

And, fourthly, there is a growing realisation that nuclear weapons may not necessarily enhance security. Indeed the vision is now increasingly linked up to what traditionally has been referred to as realism in security policy. The best way of addressing nuclear danger would ultimately be to remove these weapons. This would be the best assurance against the possibility that they end up in the wrong hands. Disarmament is an important contribution in preventing nuclear terrorism. From such a perspective disarmament would serve security interests and not be seen as altruism.

The way ahead

No one claims it will be easy to achieve total elimination of nuclear weapons. While there may be a growing consensus on the end goal, there are clearly different views on how to get there.

For a number of years there has been a proposal to initiate negotiations on a convention banning nuclear weapons. In the long run, it would make sense to have the same type of prohibition as for chemical and biological weapons.

At a certain stage it would be logical to commence discussing how to legally organise a post nuclear weapons era. However, looking at the voting record on resolutions in the UN General Assembly calling for negotiations on a convention, it seems that this issue for the time being remains highly contested. Starting negotiations today on a convention could therefore be premature.

There can be no doubt that progress would be easier to achieve if we are able to restore consensus on certain fundamental principles for nuclear disarmament and how to move closer to the vision of a world free of nuclear weapons. One of the main ambitions of the Seven Nation Initiative is indeed to contribute in forging a new consensus on nuclear disarmament and non-proliferation. In doing so we must work in innovative ways, across traditional political and geographical division lines.

A number of countries have advocated an incremental approach, where different steps would mutually support each other. The Principles and Objectives for Disarmament and Non-Proliferation adopted at the 1995 NPT Review and Extension Conference as well as the 13 practical steps adopted at the 2000 NPT Review Conference may be seen as concretisation of an incremental approach.

Given the impasse in the Conference on Disarmament and the difficulties in achieving an entry into force of the CTBT, one could ask whether the incremental approach will deliver what we aim for.

On the other hand, lack of progress in the multilateral disarmament machinery may not necessarily be ascribed to the overall strategy, but rather to the fact that there has over the last

years been a fundamental lack of political will to move the disarmament agenda forward. This was clearly illustrated at the World Summit in 2005, which failed to agree on disarmament and non-proliferation.

What we need is a mobilisation of political interest and a clear political commitment to advance the cause of nuclear disarmament and non-proliferation. That was one key objective of the Oslo Conference on Achieving the Vision of a World Free of Nuclear Weapons in February this year. This conference identified 5 principles and 10 policy recommendations. In particular the participants at the conference underlined the crucial importance of personal engagement of national leaders, the need to engage all stakeholders and build public support, and that concrete steps towards disarmament must be taken now.

Norway welcomes other initiatives which may lead to enhanced commitment to work for realising the vision of a world free of nuclear weapons, such as the latest one by Australia and Japan.

Furthermore, the Norwegian Government has sought to engage the public on a debate on arms control, by submitting a Parliamentary White Paper on Disarmament and Non-Proliferation. This document defines the Government's three main objectives for arms control: i.) security at the lowest possible level of armament through legally binding agreements, ii.) work to ensure a world free of weapons of mass destruction, and iii) eliminate weapons that cause unacceptable humanitarian suffering.

Mobilisation of political will has to be matched by practical and do-able steps. The Oslo Conference, the Blix Commission and various UN General Assembly resolutions have put forward proposals which in many cases are over-lapping. Some even speak about recycling of proposals. Yet, one should not underestimate the political value of reiterating in different fora highly needed steps to move the nuclear disarmament and non-proliferation agenda forward.

A successful disarmament agenda must cover both quantitative as well as qualitative measures. In many ways they mutually support each other.

Quantitative measures would be reducing existing arsenals on the basis of irreversibility, transparency and verification. There can be no doubt that the US and the Russian Federation must take a lead, since they possess 95 pct of the global arsenals. As a "starter" START must be saved in one way or the other. Verification is not only vital for the concerned nuclear weapons states, but also non-nuclear weapons states. We need to be certain that the numbers are getting down. That is why Norway (a non-nuclear weapon state) and the UK (a nuclear weapon state) have developed a joint project on verification of nuclear disarmament.

Qualitative steps would be measures to exclude the possibility of a nuclear arms race and measures to reduce the role of nuclear weapons in security policies. Most countries advocate an early entry into force of the CTBT. Most agree that FMCT negotiations are long overdue. In the long run a ban on future production of fissile material for weapons purposes would not suffice. We must also address the question of existing stocks. There must be a process towards full transparency, and eventually all military stocks should be converted to civilian use under IAEA auspices. Pending a comprehensive FMCT, we should explore innovative ways to address existing stocks, such as a voluntarily Fissile Missile Initiative suggested at the Oslo Conference in February.

Most would applaud progress with respect to nuclear weapons free zones, negative security assurances and not least measures to reduce the operational status of deployed nuclear weapons. Such measures would greatly contribute in reducing the role of nuclear weapons in security policies. We should in particular seek to make progress with respect to zones. If the African zone could enter into force before the 2010 NPT Review Conference, we would have achieved something tangible and concrete.

There will be a number of important challenges to be addressed on our way towards elimination, such as dealing with critical regional conflicts, re-defining the role of deterrence and not least solve politically outstanding proliferation challenges such as DPRK and Iran.

Indeed nuclear disarmament must also be part of a broader disarmament and confidence building process. I do not intend to enter a discussion on the interpretation of Article VI of the NPT. I agree with those stating that nuclear disarmament cannot await full and complete disarmament. But building confidence at both regional and global level is also of fundamental importance if we are to move towards full elimination of nuclear arms. We need regional confidence building measures, and we need universal support and even further strengthening of the BTWC, CWC and HCOC.

Furthermore, one should also take a look at the notion of deterrence. For example could nuclear weapons states take concrete steps to further reduce their reliance on nuclear deterrence? In this context, the question of further modifications of NATO's Strategic Concept has frequently been raised. It should be borne in mind that the least revision of the Strategic Concept nearly 10 years ago led to a diminished role for the nuclear deterrence. Yet, since 2002 there has been wide-spread fear that NWS are giving their nuclear weapons more political as well as military weight. That would run contrary to spirit of the 1995 and 2000 NPT Review Conferences. Within NATO, Norway and Germany have raised the question on the role of the Alliance in sustaining nuclear disarmament and non-proliferation.

Similarly, progress in nuclear disarmament cannot be seen isolated from non-proliferation. Elimination of nuclear weapons will have to take place while the civilian use of nuclear energy is expected to expand. We need to explore options for better reconciling disarmament and non-proliferation with a growing civilian nuclear application. Multilateral fuel cycle arrangements will clearly be subject for profound discussions in the years to come. It is important to remember that we should not seek one specific model, but rather identify different arrangements which facilitate peaceful uses while sustaining our non-proliferation agenda.

A credible and robust non-proliferation regime would be a major pre-condition for achieving total elimination of nuclear arms. There must be no loopholes. At a minimum that would imply full universalisation of the IAEA Comprehensive Safeguards and the Additional Protocol, and not least full implementation of Security Council Resolution 1540. The credibility of the non-proliferation regime would become even more important as the number of nuclear weapons is reduced.

To conclude, we must maintain our vision of a world without nuclear weapons. At the same time we must recognise that it will be difficult and that there is no fast track. We must foster engagement and commitment at the highest political level. We must involve all relevant stakeholders. We should not only limit ourselves to secure consensus on the long term vision, but also foster agreement on the road map towards that aim.