



Welcome comments by Tadatoshi Akiba  
*Chair of the Middle Powers Initiative*  
for the  
**Framework Forum roundtable on the UN Open Ended  
Working Group**

**Saturday 24 August 2013**

Your Excellencies, participating experts and parliamentarians, ladies and gentlemen,

On behalf of the Middle Powers Initiative I thank you for participating in this roundtable meeting today. I commend and deeply appreciate your dedication to taking forward nuclear disarmament negotiations, such that you often work long days and give up weekend time in order to deliberate and forge agreement on a difficult but vital issue for humanity.

I apologise that I am not able to join you today. I speak to you instead from Hiroshima, the site of the first use of nuclear weapons in wartime - an important reminder of the catastrophic impact of their use and the imperative to achieve nuclear abolition.

The Middle Powers Initiative was established in 1998 by eight leading international non-governmental organizations to work at the diplomatic level to advance immediate practical steps for reducing nuclear dangers and to commence negotiations to eliminate nuclear weapons.

The Article VI Forum, a series of diplomatic roundtable meetings organised by Middle Powers Initiative from 2005 to 2010, sought to build bridges between governments in order to assist the full implementation of the NPT Article VI nuclear disarmament obligation. The 2010 NPT Review Conference was successful in achieving agreement by nuclear-weapon States to undertake a number of disarmament steps, and for all States to make special efforts to establish the necessary framework to achieve and maintain a world without nuclear weapons.

Thus, in 2012 MPI, in partnership with Parliamentarians for Nuclear Nonproliferation and Disarmament, established the Framework Forum in order to assist governments in establishing this framework. The inaugural Framework Forum diplomatic roundtable was held in Vienna on May 1, 2012 supported by the Austrian Federal Ministry for European and International Affairs, and focused on *Building the Framework for a Nuclear Weapons-Free World: Laying Out the Map*. This included exploration of the elements of a nuclear weapons convention or package of

agreements, and of a road-map to achieve this through an incremental-comprehensive approach.

MPI and PNND have held additional Framework Forum events in New York in October 2012 supported by the German Mission to the United Nations, and in Berlin in February 2013 supported by the German Foreign Ministry and a number of foundations including the Fredrik Ebert Stiftung. The latter two events focused on *Creating the Conditions and Building the Framework for a Nuclear Weapons-Free World*. This included an exploration of non-nuclear security frameworks and how these could be applied to security environments and frameworks which still ascribe a role to nuclear weapons, in order to reduce, replace or eliminate the role of nuclear weapons.

The ideas and proposals emerging from these events are reflected in the MPI briefing paper *Creating the Conditions and Building the Framework for a Nuclear Weapons-Free World*, as well as in some of the recommendations made to the Open Ended Working Group in the paper *'Bridging the gaps - building the framework - ensuring success'* submitted by the Basel Peace Office, Mayors for Peace and Nuclear Age Peace Foundation, and in the *Manual for Governments* circulated by the Abolition 2000 Task Force on the OEWG.

What these proposals and ideas need of course, is increased action by governments – both non-nuclear and nuclear-armed. This includes preparatory work on a range of the elements or building blocks for a nuclear weapons free world, and the commencement of multilateral nuclear disarmament negotiations leading to a nuclear weapons convention or package of agreements.

The Open Ended Working Group has opened the door to deliberations, cooperative action, preparatory work and negotiations. Civil society actors including parliamentarians, mayors, policy analysts and campaigners – if adequately resourced - are able to assist you walk through this door and to bring other key States – including the nuclear Weapon States – with you. The Middle Powers Initiative, along with our member and partner organisations, brings together the key constituencies to do this.

I thus welcome you to this roundtable and wish you success in your deliberations and on the concluding sessions of the OEWG.

Tadatoshi Akiba  
Chair, Middle Powers Initiative