

# The Open-Ended Working Group on Nuclear Disarmament: Innovative, engaging, applauded, successful!

## MAKE THE BEST OF IT ... (AND DON'T FORGET TO SUPPORT THE FOLLOW-UP RESOLUTION).

**Innovative...** In 2012, the UN General Assembly established the Open-Ended Working Group on Taking Forward Multilateral Nuclear Disarmament Negotiations (OEWG). The OEWG discussed disarmament in a new refreshing way. Unlike traditional disarmament forums, OEWG sessions were conducted in an open interactive way and in a positive atmosphere arising from the effort of participating states to bridge gaps between approaches for nuclear disarmament that formerly polarised the international community.

The OEWG explored the issue from many angles. Discussion on the process and elements for achieving and maintenance of a world without nuclear weapons gave birth to new proposals such as the building blocks approach that provides an opening for convergence of the traditional step-by-step and comprehensive approaches. The working group also identified other key areas that deserve further attention such as exploration of legal and security aspects of nuclear weapons.

**engaging...** Working under the UNGA rules, the OEWG was open to participation of all UN member States. Non-nuclear weapon States, allies of the nuclear-weapon States (who still rely on extended nuclear deterrence) and some of the nuclear-armed States participated.

The rules of procedure also enabled unprecedented level of participation of civil society organisations that contributed actively to the OEWG meetings, presenting on the panels, making interventions from the floor, submitting working papers, holding side-events, distributing supportive materials and encouraging all States to participate.

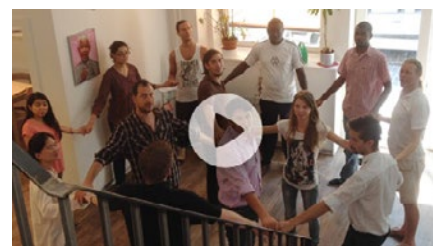
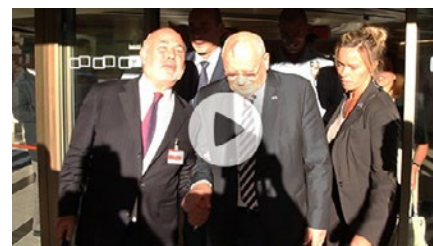
**applauded...** Various constituencies – high level politicians, parliamentarians, mayors, organisations, youth groups and individuals from around the world – joined in support for a successful outcome of the OEWG in the “Open the Door to a Nuclear Weapons Free World” project.

Parliaments and legislators – both local and national – have been especially supportive. The US Conference of Mayors in June 2013 adopted a resolution calling on the US Government to participate in good faith in the OEWG. The Parliamentary Assembly of the Organisation for Security and Cooperation in Europe welcomed the OEWG in its 2012 annual resolution that was adopted by consensus by all 56 parliamentary delegations including from four nuclear-armed states. The Inter-Parliamentary Union included the OEWG among the key issues discussed in the preparatory process for a declaration for a world without nuclear weapons to be adopted next year. Leaders of the international network of Parliamentarians for Nuclear Non-Proliferation and Disarmament commended the success of the OEWG and called for continuation of the process in letters to UN ambassadors.



OEWG held its meeting in Geneva for 15 working days spread across May, June and August 2013. Photo: PNND.

BELOW IS A SELECTION OF PHOTOS AND VIDEOS MADE FOR THE “OPEN THE DOOR TO A NUCLEAR WEAPONS FREE WORLD” PROJECT TO SUPPORT THE OEWG. WATCH THE COMPILATION VIDEO AT: [WWW.OPENTHEDOOR2013.ORG](http://WWW.OPENTHEDOOR2013.ORG)



“A very little key will open a very heavy door.”

— Charles Dickens



successful.

The OEWG succeeded in providing a positive interactive forum for deliberations and in producing a report that includes practical proposals for taking forward multilateral nuclear disarmament negotiations. The fact that the report was adopted by consensus indicates the value and feasibility of the proposals. Although the P5 countries did not participate (China, France, Russia, UK and US), the participation of many of their allies under extended nuclear deterrence, and of other nuclear-armed States, and the general aim of the OEWG to achieve feasible proposals that could be supported by all States, means that the proposals in the report provide openings for engagement with the P5 in taking forward multilateral negotiations.

## Make the best of it!

On October 18, the Chair of the OEWG presented to the UNGA First Committee the final report that summarizes proposals made in the OEWG. These proposals can guide the nuclear disarmament work of other forums including the Conference on Disarmament, Disarmament Commission, UN General Assembly, UN Security Council and NPT Review Conferences. In particular, the work done by the OEWG this year can feed into the new informal process in the Conference on Disarmament under the Informal Working Group established on 16 August.

The OEWG also provides a positive example of open, interactive engagement that other forums could emulate. **We encourage you to make the most of the OEWG by using its proposals and interactive methods of operating in these other forums.**

...and don't forget to support the follow-up resolution!

To support the best utilization of the work done by the OEWG, Costa Rica has tabled a **resolution that welcomes the OEWG report and encourages the use of its proposals in other forums.** The resolution also calls on the 2014 UNGA to review progress on nuclear disarmament and to further explore options for taking forward multilateral negotiations including, if necessary, through renewing the OEWG.

Your support for the resolution will:

- Recognize the role of the UNGA in nuclear disarmament and the value of the new format in productive discussions on this issue;
- Increase chances of resumption of work of the CD by elevating the value of the OEWG proposals, which could inspire new approaches to break the years-long deadlock;
- Encourage the use of OEWG proposals in other forums;
- Encourage the P5 to examine the OEWG proposals in good faith and engage in informal and formal deliberations on these proposals.

Further background:

Abolition 2000 Task Force on the OEWG, and the *Manual for governments on the OEWG* for download: [www.baselpeaceoffice.org/oewg](http://www.baselpeaceoffice.org/oewg)

Open the door actions: [www.openthedoor2013.org](http://www.openthedoor2013.org)

SEE ALL 50 CONTRIBUTIONS AT:  
[WWW.OPENTHEDOOR2013](http://WWW.OPENTHEDOOR2013)