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**How Non-Nuclear Weapons States can Advance Nuclear
Disarmament?**

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The negotiating history of Article VI of the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty (NPT), an article that has now become the yardstick for measuring progress in disarmament and more particularly nuclear disarmament, indicates the crucial role played by the so-called non-aligned members of the Conference on Disarmament known then as the 18-Nation Committee on Disarmament (ENDC) . The idea of an article on disarmament in the NPT emanated from Egypt, formulated in a draft article by Mexico and once an article was introduced for the first time by the United States and the Soviet Union in the identical NPT drafts of January 1968 , it underwent changes, most significant of which were put forward by Sweden , another member of the ENDC so-called 8-non-aligned group.

No wonder then that the non-aligned countries together with other non-nuclear weapon States have played and are still playing an active role to advance nuclear disarmament either by putting forward new initiatives or/and by occupying seats at the negotiating tables.

In the early days of disarmament efforts there were mainly East-West exchanges in the height of the Cold War . The choice of eight non-aligned members of the ENDC in the sixties to join in a East-west negotiations setup was a major breakthrough but not without significant consequences. France boycotted the ENDC from the beginning on the grounds that nuclear matters should only be discussed and negotiated among the nuclear Powers. The seat of France remained empty during the whole period of the NPT negotiations. France joined the NPT only in 1990, twenty years after its entry into force in 1970.

The lesson to be drawn from the breakthroughs in the sixties is that in today's world, nuclear weapons States could no longer be free of scrutiny, pressure , initiatives and an imposing presence in negotiating fora by the non-nuclear –weapon States. In 1961, the Partial Test Ban Treaty was negotiated by the US, the UK and the Soviet Union. In 1996, the Comprehensive Test Ban Treaty (CTBT) was the product of truly multilateral negotiating efforts. It could not be otherwise. Further efforts are needed to bring the Treaty into force, a challenge that we all have to face up to.

According to the CTBT, every state in the world is expected to adhere to it whether nuclear –capable or not. Likewise every State Party to the NPT has to conclude a safeguards agreement with the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) even if the State Party has no nuclear activities whatsoever.

Such participatory tendencies on a global level should encourage all non-nuclear –weapon States, large-medium-small –micro, to play a role in advancing nuclear disarmament . Again the composition of the ENDC in the sixties was indicative of that trend. For example, Burma (now Myanmar) and Ethiopia were full active members of a restricted membership negotiating organ.

Nowadays , a small central American Country ,Costa Rica, joined by Malaysia are putting forward a draft treaty outlawing nuclear weapons , a commending step that ought to be welcomed and taken seriously. This initiative reminds us of the leading role played by an island State, Malta, in the making of the law of the sea.

The individual contributions of states should also draw our attention to the contributions made by like-minded groups of states, foremost among them is the New Agenda Coalition of seven non-nuclear-weapon States which emerged as an effective and influential group during the 2000 NPT Review conference in New York. The 13 practical steps worked out by the group and endorsed by the five nuclear-weapon States Parties to the NPT, remain to this date of writing a great source of inspiration and commitment .

The working paper presented by the New Agenda Coalition at the first session of the Preparatory Committee of the 2010 NPT Review Conference held in Vienna, April-May 2007 , dissipated the doubts about the group's solidarity and cohesion. The group addressed a number of main issues that included universality, nuclear doctrines , reduction in nuclear forces, security assurances, nuclear-weapons free zones, a fissile material cut-off and testing of nuclear-weapons (NPT/CONF.2010/PC.I/W.P. 15). In order to solidify the task of the Coalition, an attempt is underway to establish a parallel coalition of non-governmental organizations and leading personalities in the seven countries members of the Coalition.

The European Union also submitted a number of working papers at the Preparatory Committee that included a paper on nuclear security (NPT/CONF.2010/PC.I/W.P.37).

In 1995, Norway joined Australia , Chile, Indonesia , Romania, South Africa and the United Kingdom in putting forward a joint initiative on nuclear disarmament and non-proliferation on the occasion of the High Level Plenary Meeting of the United Nations General Assembly in 2005 and in the aftermath of the failure of the NPT Review Conference of 2005 to come up with any concrete results . Unfortunately this group faded away after the failure of the UN General Assembly to come up with any reference to disarmament and non-proliferation in its final declaration.

But apart from the role of non-nuclear-weapon States , one should not neglect the role played by leading non-governmental organizations that bring together representatives of States and individual independent campaigners for disarmament and non-proliferation, foremost among such organizations are Pugwash Conferences for Science and World Affairs and the Middle Powers Initiative (MPI) and its affiliate Article VI Forum. Those two organizations and others such as Mayors for Peace and Reaching Critical Will can greatly contribute to the advancement of nuclear disarmament by the non-nuclear-weapon States. In the past this was ably done with the participation of government representatives by the Programme for Prompting Nuclear Non-Proliferation (PPNN) , which went into abeyance few years ago.

On the regional level non-nuclear-weapon States took the lead in establishing nuclear-weapon- free zones . They were led by Latin America and the Caribbean and the making of the Tlatelolco Treaty of 1967 which preceded the NPT by one year. Also establishing a zone free of weapons of mass destruction in the Middle East was put forward by Egypt in 1990 and endorsed in 1995 by a resolution adopted by the NPT Extension and Review Conference together with the 3 Decisions including the one extending indefinitely the duration of the NPT. There would have been no extension of the NPT by consensus in 1995 without the Resolution on the Middle East. The latter has not yet been implemented. Bringing it to fruition would greatly enhance nuclear disarmament in the Middle East and preventing further proliferation in the region. (see Egypt's paper NPT/CONF.2010/PC.I/W.P.13, 1 May 2007).

Turning our attention to the disarmament machinery, the Conference on Disarmament (CD) in Geneva made some progress in March 2007 when its six Presidents (2006-2007) presented a programme of work that would:

- initiate negotiations on a ban on the production of fissile materials for nuclear weapons (Fissban)
- continue discussions on preventing and an arms race in outer space (PAROS), nuclear disarmament and negative security assurances (NSAs) .

Apart from what would be discussed at the CD in Geneva, three major items should attract the attention of non-nuclear weapon States which could play a role in enhancing their achievement:

- the CTBT entry into force , especially the adherence to it by India, Pakistan and Israel, not to mention the United States .
- the START I Treaty of 1991 and its fate beyond 2009.
- the SORT Treaty of 2002, the so-called Moscow Treaty, and possible amendments to it for the elimination and dismantlement of warheads discarded . Here one would ask whether there will be seats for non-nuclear –weapons States at the renegotiating table of the Moscow Treaty . This would be a major breakthrough that would remind us of the breakthroughs of the sixties.

The latest moves by the United States to develop a missile shield in both the Czech Republic and Poland have triggered new worries that ought to be addressed by the non-nuclear-weapon States in Europe and elsewhere . It is a new challenge for all countries involved in advancing the case of nuclear disarmament .

Finally, education on disarmament and non-proliferation ought to be expanded in all countries and to all levels of education. The recommendations of the UN group of experts ought to be fully implemented. Such an education would certainly allow new generations of leaders to contribute to the promotion of nuclear disarmament and non-proliferation.