

## GLOBAL ENTERPRISE TO STRENGTHEN NONPROLIFERATION AND DISARMAMENT

September 11, 2020

10:00-12:00 AM (Eastern Standard Time)

Virtual Meeting

### MEETING SUMMARY

The September 11 meeting of the Global Enterprise (GE) initiated a series of virtual roundtables aimed at continuing to explore concrete and actionable commitments states could take prior to the postponed 2020 NPT Review Conference (RevCon). Participants engaged in a productive dialogue based on two discussion papers – one on “Illustrative Elements of a Statement of NPT Principles” and one on “Strengthening the NPT – Priorities for Action in 2025.”

### KEY TAKEAWAYS

#### *General Comments*

- The COVID-19 pandemic has created a new context and, thus, new opportunities and challenges for the NPT and the work of the GE and other initiatives.
- Technological and political developments are additional drivers of change to the security environment and require a fresh and forward-looking approach to achieve progress on the NPT’s goals.

#### *Discussion Paper “Illustrative Elements of a Statement of NPT Principles”*

- Most participants welcomed the effort to formulate a short, high-level statement as an example of one possible outcome from the RevCon, but noted that any such document should complement – not substitute for – pursuit of a more comprehensive outcome document.
- Several participants questioned the use of the term “principles” and observed that the discussion paper was actually a mix of high-level principles and more specific, concrete commitments/actions. Suggestions included that an **overarching high-level statement** should focus on broadly stated ideas about the NPT and its implementation (rather than specific, prescriptive elements) and reflect the treaty’s disarmament, nonproliferation, and peaceful uses pillars in a more balanced way. More specific commitments should be handled elsewhere. (See below)
- Participants had different views on the merits of **reaffirming previous commitments**. Some suggested that a blanket reaffirmation could not garner consensus because certain commitments are now irrelevant and/or that different commitments have different standing (e.g., commitments embodied in the NPT versus decisions and resolutions from

the 1995 Review and Extension Conference versus consensus final outcome documents). Other participants, however, emphasized the value of a reaffirmation of past commitments and the importance of ensuring their fulfillment. The group rejected the idea of revising past commitments.

- Recognizing the importance of ensuring that nuclear weapons are never used again, several participants commented that a high-level statement would need to emphasize the **humanitarian consequences** of nuclear weapons use and reflect the Reagan-Gorbachev principle that a nuclear war cannot be won and must never be fought.
- Asked about **missing elements from the discussion paper**, several participants mentioned the importance of NPT Compliance, as well as the issue of nuclear testing (including a reaffirmation of the moratorium and reference to the need to bring the CTBT into force). Individual comments also suggested the inclusion of verification (in particular related to monitoring fissile materials) and necessary reforms of the NPT review process.

#### *Discussion Paper “Strengthening the NPT – Priorities for Action in 2025”*

- Participants welcomed the level of ambition of the actions proposed in the draft paper. Some emphasized the importance of focusing on what is achievable in a short period of time; others expressed concern that identifying only a few actions as “priorities” might give the misimpression of a reduced priority of other commitments. There was support for ensuring balance across the three NPT pillars in any effort to identify priority actions.
- The discussion of possible priority actions to be realized between the eventual 2020 RevCon and 2025 focused in particular on commitments to:
  - **Sustain, extend, and reenergize the U.S.-Russia arms control process and strengthen integration of other nuclear weapon states (NWS) into the global arms control process.** Participants cautioned that such a pledge would need to refer to all NWS, and some argued it could even be more ambitious by focusing on a desired outcome (i.e., a comprehensive arms control agreement) instead of the process alone.
  - **Risk reduction.** Participants highlighted the importance of concrete actions to reduce the risk of use of nuclear weapons, with several also emphasizing that risk reduction could not become a substitute for more concrete steps on nuclear disarmament.
  - **Initiate negotiations on a treaty on cessation of production of fissile materials.** While participants acknowledged that concluding such negotiations would be a significant challenge, the commitment to initiate them would be a positive step. It was proposed that the pledge could also include a moratorium on the production of fissile materials for use in nuclear weapons or other explosive devices.
  - **Nuclear disarmament verification (IPNDV, GGE, etc.).** As an area where progress has been achieved in recent years, the importance of further developing verification capabilities could be emphasized.
  - **Disarmament and nonproliferation education; diversity.** Several participants mentioned the desirability of expanding education in disarmament *and* nonproliferation, as well as encouraging greater participation and engagement of a diverse community including the next generation.
- The priority actions would ideally garner consensus support prior to or at the NPT RevCon. Should that not be possible, a subset of States parties could voluntarily make

one or more pledges, or Joint Voluntary Commitments – as discussed in previous GE meetings – prior to or at the RevCon.

#### **NEXT STEPS FOR FUTURE MEETINGS**

- The next virtual GE meeting will take place on **Thursday, 22 October from 9:30 – 11:30 a.m. (EST)**.
- This and future meetings will build on ideas generated at the September 11 meeting and consider next steps to advance a set of priority actions. Discussion would return to possible Joint Voluntary Commitments as one outcome of the RevCon.
- In the upcoming meetings, we also plan to engage on other topics not covered previously, including updates on the results and status of other NPT-related initiatives.
- Given the current uncertainty about timing for the postponed RevCon, we will monitor developments closely and adapt our plans, as appropriate, once a final decision on the RevCon has been made.