



Opening Remarks of Norway at the IPNDV Annual Plenary Meeting Sydney, Australia - December 5, 2022

Delivered by Ambassador Anne Grete Riise

Norway has been part of the IPNDV from its early beginnings. We thank the NTI, the State Department, and all partners, who have managed to keep our partnership afloat throughout the pandemic.

Norway has been involved in nuclear disarmament verification issues for a long time. Our experience shows that the relevance of any disarmament verification work is dependent on that work being seen and understood as contributing to disarmament.

The UK Norway Initiative, from 2007, showed that work on nuclear disarmament verification is possible, with both a nuclear-weapon State and a non-nuclear-weapon State upholding their non-proliferation obligations.

The first phases of the IPNDV have, among other contributions, shown the need for and value of nuclear disarmament verification as a multilateral undertaking.

The Group of Governmental Experts on *the role of verification in advancing nuclear disarmament* successfully concluded its work in 2019. Among its conclusions were that: "Verification is essential in the process of nuclear disarmament and to achieving a world without nuclear weapons" ([A/74/90](#)).

We are also proud to be chairing the current Group of Governmental Experts to *further consider nuclear disarmament verification issues*. The Group has held two sessions in 2022, with two more to be held in February and May, 2023. The aim is to reach a consensus report with recommendations at the May-session. We are pleased to see that the constructive approach by all participants and the Group has been able to cover a lot of substance during the two first sessions,

Additionally, dedicated efforts on working papers and exercises carried out and led by other IPNDV partners have been conducted and are on-going.

At the start of Phase III, we referred to the aforementioned work as a firm foundation: Not breaching non-proliferation obligations, verification as a multilateral undertaking, and verification as essential to the process of disarmament.

Like everyone in this room, we regret the lack of a consensus Final Document for the NPT Review Conference in August.

We note that the proposed reference to the IPNDV did not survive the first draft. But, we are also encouraged by draft language in which: "*States parties commit to strengthen support*





for initiatives to develop multilateral disarmament verification and capacity-building in support of nuclear disarmament and as an effective step towards the implementation of article VI and to further conceptual and practical work on nuclear disarmament verification, taking into account the importance of partnerships between nuclear-weapon States and non-nuclear-weapon States on this matter and encourage broad participation by all States parties.”

While the IPNDV is not tied to the NPT – given the outcome in New York one might add fortunately – we can take guidance and inspiration from the fact that the draft language just quoted was not opposed by any State Party.

The extent to which the Partnership can support the ambition in the draft language will be our contribution to a successful Review Conference in 2026.

Going beyond the NPT, we believe we should be looking at an update to how we tell the story of the IPNDV to a non-technical external audience. This could also guide the work on knowledge sharing and knowledge retention, which continues to be important. And it would be helpful in rotating new people into our Partnership, and assist any new countries who would like to participate.

The transition from paper to practice has advanced our work. A Dutch and German food-for-thought-paper has pointed out that there is still room for focus on strategic and conceptual work. We look forward to discussing the ideas in the paper.

During this Plenary, Norway – together with our Quad partners, Sweden, the UK and the US – will provide a presentation on our work in the Quad Nuclear Verification Partnership. We believe the IPNDV continues to be a platform also for sharing ideas across initiatives to avoid duplication, and to draw inspiration and knowledge from each other.

Lastly, I would like to thank our Australian hosts for organizing this Plenary. You have truly made good on your word to avoid having the next plenary in a cold, snowy place during winter.

