

9 April 2019

English only

Group of Governmental Experts to consider the role of verification in advancing nuclear disarmament**Third session**

Geneva, 8-12 April 2019

Agenda item 5

Consideration of the role of verification in advancing nuclear disarmament, taking into account the report of the Secretary-General on the development and strengthening of practical and effective nuclear disarmament verification measures and on the importance of such measures in achieving and maintaining a world without nuclear weapons

Proposal on the establishment of a multilateral Group of Scientific and Technical Experts on Nuclear Disarmament Verification (GSTE-NDV) within the Conference on Disarmament

Submitted by Marcelo Câmara (Brazil) to the Group of Governmental Experts (GGE) established pursuant to General Assembly Resolution 71/67

I. Summary

1. While there is a global commitment to eliminate nuclear weapons, it is unlikely to come about without the implementation of strict terms of verification and while some States continue to perceive the political and security conditions as unfavorable. This Working Paper outlines the motivation and rationale for the Group of Governmental Experts (GGE)¹ to recommend to members of the General Assembly that a multilateral Group of Scientific and Technical Experts on Nuclear Disarmament Verification (GSTE-NDV) should be established. This GSTE-NDV should be open to nuclear-armed and non-nuclear-armed States. Its establishment within the United Nations framework and, in particular, under the auspices of the Conference on Disarmament would be a robust confidence-building measure allowing for inclusive ownership and a coherent, comprehensive, and sustainable approach.

¹ The Group of Governmental Experts (GGE) was established in pursuant of General Assembly Resolution 71/67 to 'consider the role of verification in advancing nuclear disarmament'.



II. Background

2. The very first resolution passed by the UN General Assembly (UNGA) established a Commission tasked to make specific proposals for the “elimination from national armaments of atomic weapons.”² Since then, many harbored hope for comprehensive nuclear disarmament, and after the Cold War ended, several governments transformed this hope into anticipation. Almost thirty years later, it is clear that this sense of expectation was premature. Many governments are openly disappointed — and several outright displeased—with the lack of progress on the elimination of nuclear weapons. Most States can agree that nuclear disarmament, as envisioned in the first resolution passed by the General Assembly, remains a distant goal.

3. However, it would be one-sided to overlook the achievement of a certain degree of conceptual advancement and substantive progress in matters related to the control of nuclear weapons. When compared to the peak of the Cold War, there are, today, fewer weapons in existence. Moreover, most nuclear-armed States have subscribed to a comprehensive nuclear test ban while others have instituted a test moratorium. The international safeguards system has also been strengthened. It would be equally one-sided to argue that enough has been done and that the present situation is as good as it gets.

4. To engage in nuclear disarmament deliberations goes beyond a mere obligation of conduct. For parties to the 1968 Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty (NPT), for instance, the prevailing legal opinion is that the obligation is one “to achieve a precise result — nuclear disarmament in all its aspects — by adopting a particular course of conduct, namely, the pursuit of negotiations on the matter in good faith.”³ While recognizing that this interpretation has not been universally accepted and that it, in any case, is not applicable to nuclear-armed States not party to the NPT, it nevertheless forms a strong basis for an argument in support of concerted action on verification on the multilateral level.

5. Good faith is an outflow of political will. It was as true in 1946 as it is today that a requirement for realizing a world without nuclear weapons is to strengthen and ultimately secure the political will of States to achieve this — especially that of the nuclear-armed States. Moreover, it is today taken as given that a commitment to eliminate nuclear weapons is unlikely to come about without the implementation of strict terms of verification. It is a virtuous cycle: building capacity to deal with verification challenges may strengthen the political will to engage in disarmament negotiations, which in turn enables good faith.

6. What about the negotiations themselves? It has long been established that all governments have a stake in the conduct of disarmament negotiations, of which verification discussions form an integral part. Moreover, all States have a right to participate on an equal footing in discussions that have a direct bearing on their national security. This right was explicitly recognized forty years ago by the UN General Assembly’s First Special Session on Disarmament (SSOD-I).⁴ More recently, initiatives have been launched that uphold this principle and tackle some of the key issues involved in multilateral nuclear disarmament verification. These include the UK-Norway Initiative⁵, its successor the Quad Nuclear

² General Assembly resolution 1/(I), Establishment of a Commission to Deal with the Problems Raised by the Discovery of Atomic Energy, A/RES/1/(I) (24 January 1946), available from [undocs.org/en/A/RES/1\(I\)](https://undocs.org/en/A/RES/1(I)).

³ Legality of the Threat or Use of Nuclear Weapons, Advisory Opinion, I.C.J. Reports 1996, p. 226, International Court of Justice (ICJ), 8 July 1996, paragraph 99.

⁴ Final Document of the Tenth Special Session of the General Assembly, A/S-10/4, 30 June 1978, paragraph 28.

⁵ The UK-Norway Initiative was set up to explore how a non-nuclear weapon State could take part in the verification of nuclear disarmament. In particular, the initiative demonstrated how such a State could engage in verification activities that do not contravene non-proliferation or national security rules but nevertheless provide that State with credible assurance that the disarmament had taken place.

Verification Partnership and the International Partnership on Nuclear Disarmament Verification (IPNDV).⁶

7. If one accepts that verification discussions are an integral part of disarmament negotiations, then it follows that ‘all States’ should have the right to participate on ‘an equal footing’. While this conclusion does not invalidate the valuable work already conducted under the auspices of groups such as the IPNDV, it points to the desirability of connecting such work to the ‘international machinery designed to deal with the problem of nuclear disarmament’, to borrow a phrase from SSOD-I.⁷ Also, this conclusion does not mean that every State must have the same role in verification discussions and activities. Rather, every State must have confidence in the direction and outcome of such processes, whether through direct involvement or otherwise.⁸

8. The Conference on Disarmament (CD) is a key institution of the international machinery. It is worth noting, in this context, that the Conference has already informally discussed whether it should “consider the establishment of a group of scientific experts, emulating that of the CTBT negotiations, to work on the technical details and instrumentation needed for the verification of nuclear arms control and disarmament”.⁹

9. On 16 February 2018, the CD adopted a decision on the establishment of subsidiary bodies on all agenda items of the Conference.¹⁰ These bodies have, *inter alia*, focused on the ban of the production of fissile materials for nuclear weapons and other nuclear explosive devices. They could also consider “other issues relevant to the substantive work of the Conference.” There is an opportunity, should the Conference decide to extend these bodies in coming years, to build scientific collaboration in the work of the Conference. In particular, the February 2018 decision could pave the way for future progress on both the technologies and inspection techniques required to achieve verification and also the methodologies used to investigate and develop them.¹¹

10. Besides the CD, the United Nations itself is central to future verification efforts. Recently, the Secretary-General has advocated for the resumption of a ‘substantive and results-oriented dialogue’ and accordingly instructed the UN Office of Disarmament Affairs (UNODA) to ‘support the development of nuclear disarmament verification standards, techniques and capacities’.¹²

11. For decades, technical verification discussions were held between the weapons possessors. In 2007, this changed with the rise of informal collaborations, such as the aforementioned UK-Norway Initiative, the Quad and the IPNDV. All these initiatives have in common a more significant role for non-nuclear-armed States in developing verification measures. They have helped to bring technical issues to the forefront, and they have created a desire to build a wider capacity to deal with them.

⁶ Brazil is a committed member and supporter of the IPNDV but notes that it is of restricted membership.

⁷ Final Document of the Tenth Special Session of the General Assembly, A/S-10/4, 30 June 1978, paragraph 10.

⁸ States have common but differentiated responsibilities around nuclear weapons, including for nuclear risk reduction, non-proliferation, and disarmament, see Brixey-Williams, Sebastian. “Common but Differentiated Nuclear Responsibilities: Perspectives from Tokyo.” BASIC. February 2019. <https://www.basicint.org/wp-content/uploads/2019/02/Brixey-Williams-Common-but-Differentiated-Nuclear-Responsibilities-February-2019-WEB-4.pdf>.

⁹ Letter dated 14 September 2017 from the Permanent Representative of the Republic of the Union of Myanmar to the Secretary-General of the Conference on Disarmament transmitting the Report on the informal meetings on Agenda items 1 and 2 with a general focus on nuclear disarmament, CD/2106, 15 September 2017.

¹⁰ CD/WP.605/Rev.2.

¹¹ At the time of issuance of this Working Paper, a decision within the CD to extend the subsidiary groups for 2019 was still pending.

¹² UN (2018), *Securing Our Common Future: An Agenda for Disarmament*, United Nations, New York, <https://doi.org/10.18356/80210262-en>. See pp. 18 and 23.

12. There is now an opportunity to give all these efforts the institutional credibility they deserve and recognize their role within the ‘international machinery designed to deal with the problem of nuclear disarmament’.

III. The CTBT Group of Scientific Experts: a Possible Inspiration

13 The Group of Scientific Experts devoted to the Comprehensive Nuclear Test Ban Treaty (GSE-CTBT) was established in July 1976. Proposed as a response to scientific and political disagreements over the verifiability of a proposed treaty prohibiting nuclear testing, the Group consisted of scientific experts and representatives of more than 40 States—both nuclear-armed and non-nuclear-armed—and was open to all CD members as well as non-members. These experts represented a diverse range of countries such as: Argentina, Bulgaria, China, Federal Republic of Germany, France, German Democratic Republic, India, Iran, Mongolia, New Zealand, Pakistan, Peru, Russian Federation, Seychelles, South Africa, the Soviet Union, United Kingdom and United States.

14. The GSE-CTBT’s mandate was to ‘consider and report on international co-operative measures to detect and identify seismic events, so as to facilitate the monitoring of a comprehensive test ban’. A distinctive feature of this mandate was its limited scope. However, the parallels are sufficient for lessons to be learned from the GSE-CTBT.

15. Many of the factors underlying the creation of the GSE-CTBT are present in the contemporary disarmament verification debate. For instance, the establishment of the GSE-CTBT was proposed at a time when there was little or no political appetite for a treaty. Today, it is almost needless to point out that there is little appetite for a Nuclear Weapons Convention among the nuclear-armed States.

16. The establishment of the GSE-CTBT also served other goals. One was to develop science policy fostering a common understanding of verification challenges. Another objective, again not explicitly stated, was to convey clear and internationally peer-reviewed scientific information to policymakers without a commitment to commence political negotiations. The GSE-CTBT was formed after a considerable amount of work had already been initiated under the auspices of individual States.

17. Today's context is similar, with various verification research efforts being undertaken by groupings of States and independent research institutes. Much of the work undertaken by the GSE-CTBT was carried out at the national level and then presented and reviewed by the Group as a whole during its meetings in Geneva. During the forty-fifth session of the GSE-CTBT in 1996, for example, 44 papers containing information on national investigations were assessed.

18. If one agrees that a GSTE-NDV could play a useful role, but also recognizes that the mandate and methods of the GSE-CTBT are not entirely applicable, the question would then be: What should the prospective Group of Scientific and Technical Experts’ mandate and methods be?

IV. Exploring a Potential Mandate

19. It would be left to the purview of the overseeing institution to develop a clear and detailed description of the GSTE-NDV’s composition, mandate and activities.

20. However, it could be beneficial to formulate some views on what a GSTE-NDV could usefully do, to illuminate what such a group could provide, and inspire and guide the subsequent effort. For the GSTE-NDV to discharge its mandate in a balanced and sustainable way, some central requirements should be met, such as the technical nature of its work, an appropriate duration, an equitable composition, with experts from both nuclear-armed and non-nuclear-armed States and across regions.

21. The submissions made to the UN Secretary-General following UNGA Resolution 71/67 provide a description of the existing capacity within non-nuclear-armed States to

participate in such activities. The submissions give an impression of State involvement in current initiatives and their experience, expertise and technical resources and facilities that could be made available to future efforts. Several submissions highlight what is, and what is not, acceptable for the individual State. It is important for any proposal from the GGE to carefully take these views into account.

22. Submissions recognize the role that jointly identifying and developing effective verification measures can play in enhancing transparency and mutual trust, and increasing confidence between States.

23. A commonality in the submissions is the need to consider ‘technologies’ and the ‘methodologies used to investigate and develop them’ but also ‘inspection techniques’ while putting some emphasis on ‘procedural and methodological issues’. Several submissions encourage more States to undertake efforts in developing and strengthening nuclear disarmament verification measures. In other words, they emphasize the importance of broadening the availability of specialized skills for nuclear disarmament verification. Others stress the importance of the development of technical, procedural and academic skills as a way to also take into account national security, safety as well as legally binding non-proliferation obligations. These also often highlight existing initiatives and institutes.¹³

24. Many submissions caution against, and some outright reject, a more profound role of technical organizations, principally the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA), in future efforts. While Brazil does not agree with this proposition, it is of the opinion that such views ought to be respected in the spirit of making progress.

25. Importantly, as has been argued above, several submissions point to the need to integrate the proposed GSTE-NDV into the established disarmament machinery within the United Nations system.

26. Many of the submissions refer to research activities that could develop practical and effective multilateral nuclear disarmament verification measures. They, however, make the point that the aim of such research activities should not be to develop a universal verification model, nor prejudice the nature and scope of any eventual nuclear disarmament instrument or instruments.

27. The latter point is essential. The very specifics of nuclear disarmament verification will be treaty dependent. Disarmament verification research should focus on the feasibility and effectiveness of verification measures applicable to the various phases and circumstances of the disarmament process. These phases include reductions and limitations of weapons, their elimination and, ultimately, the maintenance of a world without nuclear weapons. Verification research should be conducted according to three principles: non-discrimination, non-proliferation, and the balance between credibility and the sensitivity of information.¹⁴

28. Taking the above views into account, a GSTE-NDV could be established to appraise scientific, technical and legal research into the processes of verifying nuclear arms reductions, as well as their elimination, and to provide a platform through which research could be disseminated and preserved within the disarmament machinery. In this way, the

¹³ These include inter alia: the United Nations; the United Kingdom-Norway Initiative (now expanded as the Quad Nuclear Verification Partnership); the US-UK technical cooperation for arms control; the Trilateral Initiative between the United States, the Russian Federation, and the International Atomic Energy Agency; the NTI Verification Pilot Project; the UK-based Verification Research, Training and Information Centre (VERTIC); the International Partnership for Nuclear Disarmament Verification (IPNDV); the European Atomic Energy Community (EURATOM); Brazilian-Argentine Agency for Accounting and Control of Nuclear Materials (ABACC); the G7 Global Partnership; the International Science and Technology Centre (ISTC); and the European Safeguards Research and Development Association (ESARDA); as well as relevant verification-related information emanating from the reports of groups of governmental experts established by the UN Secretary-General, such as the recently concluded High-Level Fissile Material Cut-off Treaty Expert Preparatory Group.

¹⁴ See the working paper entitled ‘Basic Principles of Nuclear Disarmament Verification’ submitted by China.

GSTE-NDV would facilitate the work of scientific and technical experts, for example, by providing direction and connecting different initiatives.

29. Taking a broad mandate approach would allow its work to fall within the purview of the established disarmament machinery, including the Conference on Disarmament. It would also not require the direct involvement of organizations such as the IAEA, although having it observing the proceedings would be valuable.¹⁵

30. Drawing on this, a potential mandate could be:

(a) To develop guidelines for proliferation resistant, yet transparent, exchanges of technical information based on the rules of all participating countries for the restriction of information.

(b) To review previous and existing initiatives, and so appraise the state of knowledge of the science and technology relevant to the verification of international agreements on nuclear arms limitations, reductions or elimination; taking into account internationally agreed principles on verification.¹⁶

(c) To initiate programmes and studies on the science and technology relevant to the verification of international agreements on nuclear arms limitations, reductions or elimination;¹⁷

(d) To explore scientific and technological solutions to challenges posed or anticipated by the verification of international agreements on nuclear arms limitations, reductions or elimination;¹⁸

(e) To identify, and subsequently propose, ways to strengthen bilateral or multilateral instruments relevant to the verification of international agreements on nuclear arms limitations, reductions or elimination;

(f) To identify and propose verification measures that could be included in future international agreements on nuclear arms limitations, reductions or elimination; and

(g) To support capacity-building and inclusive participation.

V. Proposed Composition and Functioning of the Group

31. The GSTE-NDV could be established as a subsidiary body under the Conference of Disarmament. The group would be open to all member States of the Conference and also to non-members invited upon their request by the CD unless it decides otherwise. The group

¹⁵ See above regarding some States fundamentally objecting to a deeper role for the IAEA.

¹⁶ See Final Document of the Tenth Special Session, General Assembly resolution S-10/2, UN document A/RES/S-10/2, 30 June 1978; and UN, *Verification in All its Aspects: Study on the Role of the United Nations in the Field of Verification*, UN document A/45/372, 28 August 1990, Section II. The Algerian working paper, dated 16 October 2018, contains useful information on how said principles of verification can be interpreted in light of recent developments on the matter.

¹⁷ Following this mandate, the GSTE-NDV would enable more States to get involved in the important work on practical verification options by creating an environment for States or groups of States to set up their own programmes; by helping identify relevant experts within such States; setting out key technical challenges which need to be resolved; and bringing together experts from a range of States to share knowledge and experiences and develop shared projects. Many of the proposals put forward by the United Kingdom and Indonesia in their November 2018 non-paper prepared for consideration by the GGE, and emphasizing the need for national capacity building, could be captured by this mandate formulation, and in particular the phrase ‘to initiate’. This would also give the proposed initiative an institutional anchor on the multilateral level, which could be used to justify national budgets for this purpose.

¹⁸ In line with this mandate, the GSTE-NDV could play a key role in facilitating, for instance, a biennial scientific and technical conference on verification, much like the CTBT Science and Technology Conference, as a way to bring experts from all over the world together to share lessons and ideas and to foster co-operation and conceptualise future projects. The logistical organisation of such an event could be outsourced to an independent body such as UNIDIR or the UN Secretariat (UNODA).

can work either as an open-ended group, or with a fixed duration, which could be renewed if the Member States so wish.

32. It would make sense to invite a selection of the membership, and not the whole conference, to participate. A workable grouping of up to 35 States, participating on voluntary basis, would be sufficient, if:

(a) All nuclear-armed States appoint an expert;

(b) Experts are appointed by non-nuclear-armed States with due regard being given to equitable geographical representation and those with significant nuclear expertise.

33. Nominated individuals should be suitably qualified in terms of both education and experience given that relevant knowledge is a prerequisite to obtaining a credible nuclear disarmament verification mechanism.

34. Experts would be government-appointed and serve in their personal capacity. They could be assisted by additional advisers assigned to them by the sending State. The group could also be supported by the United Nations Institute for Disarmament Research (UNIDIR) and others if agreed and appropriate. The experts could elect a chair from a nuclear-armed State assisted by a co-chair from a non-nuclear-armed State.

35. In order to ensure that States are satisfied with the composition of the Group, a State could have the right to object to the designation of a particular nominated expert. As such, the GSTE-NDV may wish to develop a mechanism by which such a situation could be resolved.

VI. Funding

36. Holding two GSTE-NDV meetings a year, together involving ten days of interpretation, documentation and other support service requirements would cost up to US\$400,000. If the meetings were without interpretation and a documentation service, the cost would be reduced.

37. In this context, Norway's Working Paper circulated in March 2019 proposing a Nuclear Disarmament Verification Fund (NDVF) should be given serious consideration.

VII. Ensuring Proliferation Resistant Transparency

38. Integral disarmament assumes that the long-term goal of eliminating nuclear weapons should be embedded in a system of co-operative security, in which verification must be central. A GSTE-NDV's work should thus strengthen and not undermine international security and stability, and therefore strict non-proliferation measures should be adopted. Work to prepare for future verification challenges must be conducted in a manner that is transparent, yet proliferation resistant. Involving non-nuclear-armed States in this endeavor is vital in creating widespread acceptance of, and trust in, proposed verification solutions, but it poses its own set of challenges. It is thus essential to develop guidance for the exchange of technical information through the GSTE-NDV.

39. This guidance should be based on the rules of participating countries for the restriction of information. Any information exchange can only be allowed to the extent permissible by law, be it national or international. Clear rules should enable information exchange between the nuclear-armed States but also the sharing of information with non-nuclear-armed States.

40. Successive collaborative efforts in the field have shown that many of the underpinning issues can be presented in a way that would allow non-nuclear-armed States to contribute constructively. The development of flexible, generic solutions can be tailored to support 'real world' scenarios.

VIII. The Policy Case for the Conference on Disarmament

41. Recent UN High-Level Conferences have produced important multilateral progress on issues such as climate change, the need to conserve and sustainably use the oceans, seas and marine resources for development, and the management of refugees and migration. The success of these processes is due to the willingness of States to co-operate and find creative ways to move forward on complex issues.

42. Advancing towards a world free of nuclear weapons is no less urgent and critical and the pursuit of this objective must continue. The opportunity to make headway should be seized on by all States regardless of their preferred approach. Technical and dispassionate debates and research activities—both basic and applied—on possible measures to achieve concrete and sustained progress towards the total elimination of nuclear weapons is key for revitalizing the non-proliferation and disarmament agenda. The mandate of this GGE ‘to consider the role of verification in advancing nuclear disarmament’ is itself an expression of renewed commitment to that end.

43. It is noteworthy that when the GSE-CTBT was created there was no prospect in sight for the international community to enter into negotiations for a legally binding instrument aimed at prohibiting nuclear tests. The GSE-CTBT assembled and performed its mandate without any time-bound schedule and was impervious to the vagaries of the international climate. Many of the procedures and technologies currently used by the Preparatory Commission for the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty Organization (CTBTO) as it builds up an operational verification regime for when the Treaty enters into force were developed by the GSE-CTBT. This logic is also applicable to a GSTE-NDV.

44. In light of the existing dissension on nuclear disarmament approaches, the establishment of a GSTE-NDV would be a robust confidence-building measure for all States. Providing for technical discussions on options for nuclear disarmament verification, the GSTE-NDV will allow for shared ownership of an undertaking perceived to be in the interest of all and will also allow for verification options to be developed through a comprehensive, inclusive, sustainable and coherent approach. For implementable verification measures to be developed, sustained interest, investment, technical progress, increased capacity levels and the generation of agreed options over time will be required.

45. Both practical and political considerations should influence the decision on which entity would be most suitable to establish and host a GSTE-NDV. Its long impasse notwithstanding, the CD comprises all nuclear-armed States, key regional States as well as those with sophisticated nuclear fuel cycles. Furthermore, its method of work provides ample latitude for each of its members to hold sway in its program of work, including that of a GSTE-NDV.

46. Six considerations stand out as practical reasons for this choice:

(a) The GSTE-NDV could be an important advisory body to the rotating Presidency of the CD on an issue of technical complexity.

(b) As a standing sub-committee/subsidiary body it would have regular sessions and would report back to CD members periodically. The results of its work would also be included in the CD’s annual reports to the UN General Assembly.

(c) It would maintain nuclear disarmament verification on the CD’s agenda in a way that will not be perceived as imposing artificial timelines or as indicating a commitment to commence political negotiations.

(d) A GSTE-NDV could significantly contribute to the revitalization of the CD by creating a structured exchange of views on an issue of marked sensitiveness.

(e) With sustained funding, a technical mandate, and a sufficient operating time-frame, the GSTE-NDV would significantly assist in the development of a shared understanding of the technical, procedural and policy challenges of nuclear disarmament verification and their solutions.

(f) The fact that UNIDIR has its headquarters in Geneva's Palais des Nations should be also considered as a further incentive to locate the GSTE-NDV within the CD. The functioning of the Group in the vicinity of an autonomous institute entrusted with research in disarmament within the United Nations could generate mutually beneficial synergies.

IX. Conclusion

47. As set out in document UNGA/RES/71/67, the mandate of this GGE is to "consider the role of verification in advancing nuclear disarmament." The proposal, as outlined and motivated for above, represents a concrete advance in nuclear disarmament verification with the potential to re-invigorate the international disarmament machinery. Brazil proposes that the GGE's final report recommends that the UNGA calls for the establishment of a GSTE-NDV under the auspices of the Conference on Disarmament.

Annex

Explanatory Note to the Revisions made to the Working Paper submitted by Brazil to the Group of Governmental Experts (GGE) established pursuant to General Assembly Resolution 71/67 on the establishment of a multilateral Group of Scientific and Technical Experts on Nuclear Disarmament Verification (GSTE-NDV) within the Conference on Disarmament

1. The revised paper responds to discussions at the last meeting of the GGE, held in Geneva, Switzerland, from 12 to 16 November 2018, as well as at Wilton Park, United Kingdom, on 30 and 31 January 2019. The main changes are as follows:
 2. The paper now proposes that the Group be called the ‘Group of Scientific and Technical Experts on Nuclear Disarmament Verification’ (GSTE-NDV) to emphasize its technical focus as suggested by a number of GGE members. A new section on ‘Ensuring Proliferation Resistant Transparency’ has been introduced to address concerns related to the control of sensitive information. The mandate of the proposed GSTE-NDV has been amended to reflect this new concept. The concept is further reinforced by a proposal for the chairmanship of the group to be held by a nuclear-armed State, among other suggestions.
 3. A new section on funding consists of a cost estimate for holding two week-long meetings in Geneva per year and, in this context, takes good note of Norway’s Working Paper on a Nuclear Disarmament Verification Trust Fund.
 4. The working paper continues to argue for first consideration to be given to a GSTE-NDV operating in Geneva. Other proposals, such as establishing the group in Vienna, have merits. However, some States would have an objection to involving the IAEA in any additional capacity than a recipient and potential beneficiary of the GSTE-NDV’s work. The paper leaves open whether the work of the group should be open-ended or of fixed duration.
 5. Placing the GSTE-NDV under the UN General Assembly may also be an option. However, there is a disadvantage to this proposal: it would subject the work of the GSTE-NDV to majority voting. This could be a disincentive to the nuclear-armed States’ participation. The consensus rule of the CD, while often seen as an obstructor of substantive work, serves to ensure that all work takes into account the critical interests of all States.
 6. Some experts have also suggested that the GSTE-NDV operate as a consortium or a panel. These options do not take into account the need, as this working paper argues, for such a grouping to be located within the international disarmament machinery nor would a consortium model bring us closer to inclusive ownership. A more formal structure for collaboration would thus be preferable. At the same time, the proposal set out in this working paper is designed to draw on the work of such groups, and enable the creation of others if need be.
-