

## **CONTRIBUTION BY AUSTRIA**

### **UNGA RESOLUTION 79/240 ON A GROUP OF SCIENTIFIC AND TECHNICAL EXPERTS ON NUCLEAR DISARMAMENT VERIFICATION**

Austria welcomes the opportunity to submit its views on resolution 79/240 entitled “Group of Scientific and Technical Experts on Nuclear Disarmament Verification” adopted by the General Assembly on 24 December 2024, which Austria supported.

Austria welcomes the establishment of a Group of Scientific and Technical Experts on Nuclear Disarmament Verification with a view to contributing towards achieving the ultimate goal of the total elimination of nuclear weapons. We consider such a group could offer a positive contribution towards verifiable, transparent and irreversible nuclear disarmament efforts, offering a targeted, multilateral forum for scientists and experts to exchange views and build capacity on nuclear disarmament verification. It should constitute an important effort in the preparation of scientists, experts and States as well as the development of relevant technologies, methodologies and procedures for nuclear disarmament verification.

Given that only limited efforts are in place to build capacity outside of nuclear-armed states, this Group of Scientific and Technical Experts could take up an important role in expanding the network of experts and offer a valuable forum for exchange, including on regional approaches to nuclear disarmament verification research and innovation. It should also consider approaches thusfar less considered, such as cooperative and multilateral approaches. Existing approaches and experiences in conventional verification can offer a valuable contribution enhancing the credibility of nuclear disarmament verification.

With regard to the mandate, the Group can bring knowledge and expertise from past and ongoing initiatives on nuclear disarmament verification together to be preserved within the UN system. As part of the UN disarmament machinery, the group would further lend legitimacy to disarmament verification measures based on an inclusive, transparent process in which nuclear armed states and non-nuclear weapon states come together.

In order to avoid duplication, the Group of Scientific and Technical Experts can build on other measures undertaken in arms control, disarmament and non-proliferation based on the principles of irreversibility, verifiability and transparency. Relevant discussions and processes include the “international partnership for disarmament verification” (IPNDV) and the Scientific Advisory Group established within the Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons, which similarly assembles a broad range of expertise that among others considers measures to strengthen nuclear disarmament verification. The research conducted and preliminary conclusions reached could contribute to the work of the Group of Scientific and Technical Experts established under this resolution.

The highly relevant expertise of the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) should be a major source to be taken into account by the Group of Scientific and Technical Experts. The IAEA gained experience in the verification of dismantling a nuclear weapons program and has relevant related expertise in other cases. It furthermore offers unique expertise through its safeguards work. Engagement with the technical experts meetings of the IAEA in Vienna on a regular basis would allow the Group to build on existing knowledge.

An important aspect of verifying nuclear disarmament is the elimination of the infrastructure to test nuclear weapons. The Comprehensive Nuclear Test Ban-Treaty Organization (CTBTO) with its globally spanning International Monitoring System established itself as a reliable source in ensuring that, pending the entry into force of the CTBT, the moratorium on nuclear testing remains upheld. The Science and Technology Conferences of CTBT offer opportunities for exchange that could also enhance knowledge of nuclear disarmament and verification options.

Austria is of the view that all processes can profit from engagement and an open exchange of knowledge and experiences and we would encourage efforts in this regard. The GSTE should therefore ensure this with all relevant institutions and treaty regimes.