As per ODA note verbale ODA/2022-0046/NDV Norway would like to give the following views on “The Group of Governmental Experts to further consider nuclear disarmament verification issues”:

Norway participated and chaired the work of the Group of Governmental Experts to further consider nuclear disarmament verification issues\(^1\). We highlight with gratitude the astute and constructive engagement from all the experts in the group, which made it possible for the Group to adopt a substantial final report by consensus. The final report builds upon and takes forward the work of the previous GGE\(^2\), which combined has given a strong conceptual foundation for further work on nuclear disarmament verification (NDV) issues within the UN in a practical manner.

The work in the Group, as reflected in the report, was centered around three workstreams within NDV: i) conceptual issues, ii) capacity building, and iii) the concept of a Group of Scientific and Technical Experts (GSTE). Gender and equal opportunities for men and women is a cross-cutting issue throughout the report. We believe there is merit in continuing to pursue all three workstreams and cross-cutting issues.

There are many elements from the report that could be highlighted, and we will just single out a few. On the conceptual issues, it is worth underlining that the report for the first time articulated a working definition of NDV. It further reached consensual findings on objective and purpose, institutional arrangements and governance, and scope of NDV. Norway would also like to highlight from the conclusions that “NDV is an essential element of a nuclear disarmament process. Work on NDV is not an end in itself and is not a prerequisite to progress nuclear disarmament. Such work should aim to promote progress on nuclear disarmament”.

Importantly the conclusions also state that “[I]t would be valuable to take stock of existing experiences in NDV activities to be factored into future efforts”, and the Group recommends, inter alia, that “UN member States continue the work on NDV issues, as well as on possible modalities and format of such work”. In our view this work should be pursued in the form of a Group of Scientific and Technical Experts (GSTE) on NDV, which will have a strong conceptual basis to build on from the two GGEs on NDV.

The concept of a GSTE-NDV was discussed thoroughly in the Group, as reflected in the report, and we would especially highlight Brazil’s efforts in developing this concept. As a next step on taking forward this concept, all interested Member States should be enabled to engage in consultations on the objectives, mandates, and modalities of such an entity.

Norway considers that the objective for a GSTE-NDV could be twofold:

- to make sure Member States are prepared for future negotiations on disarmament and its verification arrangements; and

- to ensure technologies, methodologies and procedures exist such that verification can be as effective and sustainable as possible. Effective verification includes the need for ensuring high confidence that

\(^1\) A/78/120
\(^2\) A/74/90
States are fulfilling their obligations, as well as in protecting proliferative- and other sensitive information.

The **mandate** for a GSTE-NDV could be to:

(i) appraise knowledge on NDV, derived from past and ongoing initiatives on NDV or related areas;

(ii) consider challenges in NDV in terms of tools, techniques, processes and procedures;

(iii) enable States to participate in technical NDV discussions on a voluntary basis;

(iv) incorporate and preserve knowledge on NDV within the UN system and provide assurance to the international community that States are focused on this matter.

On the **modalities** we consider that the GSTE-NDV should be part of the disarmament machinery. Its work should be deliberative, focusing on scientific and technical exchanges that enhance knowledge of NDV options and their benefits and challenges. The group would be open to nuclear-weapon States, non-nuclear-weapon States and States not party to the NPT, in an inclusive and voluntary manner. Its deliberations will not be legally binding. It will not be tasked to negotiate any treaty on nuclear disarmament. Its establishment will not be a prerequisite for such negotiations nor prejudge their possible outcome.

In parallel to continuing developing the concept of a GSTE-NDV, Norway would like to see more efforts for capacity building on NDV and will continue promoting regional approaches for this purpose and to develop a funding mechanism for capacity building through a collaboration between interested states.