

United Nations draft resolution on Taking forward multilateral disarmament negotiations

Suggested Parliamentary Question

Background:

The Conference on Disarmament (CD) – comprised of 65 member states and serving as a principal multilateral negotiating forum - has been unable to work on any disarmament items since it negotiated the Comprehensive Nuclear Test Ban Treaty in 1996. The CD has a work-plan to negotiate a treaty on fissile materials and discuss three other areas with the aim to lead to negotiations: negative security assurances, prevention of an arms race in outer space and nuclear disarmament leading to a nuclear-weapons-free world. However, the consensus practice (even on procedural decisions) has prevented any work on this program. The treaties banning cluster munitions and landmines were both negotiated outside the CD hosted by 'like-minded' countries. Negotiations currently underway on an Arms Trade Treaty were established by the United Nations General Assembly.

A group of countries, frustrated at the lack of progress in the CD, has submitted a resolution to the United Nations General Assembly (UNGA) entitled Taking forward multilateral disarmament negotiations, which would give the CD one last chance to start work on its disarmament program. If the CD continues to stall, the UNGA would establish working groups on the four key issues in order to commence deliberations and negotiations.

The resolution is in **process** to get multilateral nuclear disarmament deliberations and negotiations underway. In this sense it complements UN resolutions on **substance**, including those on a fissile materials treaty, legally binding negative security assurances, prevention of an arms race in outer space, and achieving a nuclear-weapons free world through negotiations leading to the conclusion of a nuclear weapons convention.

Below is a suggested question for parliamentarians to ask their Foreign Minister regarding whether their government will support this UNGA resolution.

Suggested parliamentary question:

In light of the failure of the Conference on Disarmament to undertake any substantive disarmament work since 1996 despite a generally agreed program of work, will the government support draft UN General Assembly (A/C.1/66/L.2)) on **Taking forward multilateral disarmament negotiations**, which provides for the possibility of a United-Nations-led process if the Conference on Disarmament fails in its next session to commence deliberations and negotiations on a treaty on fissile materials, negative security assurances, prevention of an arms race in outer space and nuclear disarmament leading to a nuclear-weapons-free world?