Statement by High Representative Izumi Nakamitsu on the outcome of the final session of the open-ended working group on a fourth Special Session of the General Assembly devoted to disarmament

Ms. Izumi Nakamitsu

High Representative for Disarmament Affairs
United Nations

12 June, 2017
United Nations, New York
I congratulate Chairman Mr. Fernando Luque (Ecuador) and all States on the successful conclusion of the open-ended working group (OEWG) on a fourth Special Session of the General Assembly devoted to disarmament (SSOD-IV).

Against a backdrop of considerable challenges to disarmament and non-proliferation and tensions at the global and regional levels, the international community has once again demonstrated that progress is both possible and desirable. States have risen to the challenge illustrating that the combination of inclusive dialogue, dedicated multilateralism and committed diplomacy is always the best option.

The OEWG, tasked to consider possible objectives and an agenda of an SSOD-IV, was able to reach consensus on recommendations for transmittal to the General Assembly, while referring the issue of the establishment of a possible preparatory committee back to the General Assembly for further discussions.

Under the able leadership of Mr. Luque, the OEWG recommended, inter alia, that an SSOD-IV comprehensively assess the situation in the field of disarmament and international security building upon the principles and priorities established at the 1978 First Special Session of the General Assembly devoted to disarmament. It also recommended a review of the disarmament machinery with a view to maintaining its relevance and increasing its effectiveness. Bearing in mind an action-oriented outcome, an elaboration of concrete, practical measures to make progress in this field was also recommended.

The consensus adoption of these recommendations is no small feat. The matter of convening of an SSOD-IV has been on the agenda of the General Assembly since 1994 and the subject of 22 resolutions and decisions. Two previous OEWGs, convened in 2003 and 2007, respectively, while allowing for constructive and open discussions, could not reach such a conclusion.

Special Sessions on Disarmament present the unique opportunity to advance our shared goal of general and complete disarmament under effective international control.

Historically, disarmament and arms control have played an intrinsic role in easing international tensions and building confidence and trust among States. Confidence and trust-building are key ingredients for security and sustaining peace. In this regard, the will of the international community to pursue an SSOD-IV is whole-heartedly welcomed.

The third Special Session of the General Assembly devoted to disarmament, SSOD-III, was convened nearly thirty years ago in 1988. Much has changed in the world since then.
I look forward to the General Assembly’s consideration of the recommendations of the OEWG in the hopes that an SSOD-IV could be convened and make a contribution to building confidence and trust among States.

I reiterate my congratulations to all States and reaffirm my personal support and the support of my Office to the next steps in considering the convening of an SSOD-IV.