In the view of Mexico, it was made clear at the high-level meeting of the General Assembly on nuclear disarmament of 26 September 2016* that there was a strong sentiment that the United Nations should, without delay, undertake to address the item that was the subject of the first resolution of the General Assembly in 1946: the total elimination of nuclear weapons.

While Mexico does not possess nuclear weapons, it is cognizant of the devastating short- and long-term effects that an intentional or accidental nuclear detonation could have, not only regionally but globally, on the population and the environment. The total elimination of nuclear weapons has therefore been a key element of the position of Mexico in multilateral contexts, in line with its foreign policy and the principles contained in the Charter of the United Nations. Something that does not exist cannot proliferate or be deployed.

In that context, and with the aim of contributing to the objective of the total elimination of nuclear weapons, during the seventieth session of the United Nations General Assembly Mexico submitted, coordinated and facilitated the resolution on taking forward multilateral nuclear disarmament negotiations in the First Committee. The resolution, which was sponsored by 28 other countries,1 establishes an open-ended working group that shall convene under the rules of procedure of the General Assembly (with the possibility of voting and inclusive participation that includes representatives of international organizations and civil society), with a mandate to substantively address new norms and legal measures on nuclear disarmament.

The open-ended working group will convene in Geneva for 15 days in 2016, meeting on three occasions. The first session was from 22 to 26 February, the second was from 2 to 13 May and the third will be in the week of 22 August.

Mexico has stated that while there can be no progress in disarmament in the absence of the nuclear-weapon countries, the open-ended working group should focus on the progress that can be

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*Translator’s note: The conference was held in 2013; the original Spanish contains an error.
made by non-nuclear-weapon States, namely the development of new norms and the prevention of a humanitarian catastrophe. Mexico submitted, in its national capacity, a working paper entitled "A legally-binding instrument that will need to be concluded to attain and maintain a world without nuclear weapons: a prohibition on nuclear weapons" (A/AC.286/WP.17), which identifies a number of elements that should be included in a prohibition on nuclear weapons and contains recommendations for developing a legally-binding instrument.

Mexico also endorsed the working paper submitted by Austria entitled “The 'Legal Gap': Recommendations to the Open-ended Working Group on taking forward nuclear disarmament negotiations” and the document “Addressing nuclear disarmament: Recommendations from the perspective of nuclear-weapon-free zones”.

As a member State of the Community of Latin American and Caribbean States (CELAC), Mexico supported the submission of the working paper entitled "Proposal by the Community of Latin American and Caribbean States (CELAC) on effective legal measures to attain and maintain a world without nuclear weapons" and the document entitled “Treaty of Tlatelolco: A disarmament instrument” submitted by the Agency for the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons in Latin America and the Caribbean.

Mexico also participated in the open-ended working group as a member of CELAC, the New Agenda Coalition and the Humanitarian Initiative, and as a member of one of the nuclear-weapon-free zones, which reiterated their support for nuclear disarmament.

In addition, together with Austria, the Holy See, Ireland and South Africa, Mexico has since 2012 promoted the approach known as the humanitarian initiative, which emerged as an alternative to the frustration of the non-nuclear-weapon States and of civil society with the lack of progress towards nuclear disarmament.

At the three Conferences on the Humanitarian Impact of Nuclear Weapons, held in Oslo in 2013 and in Nayarit, Mexico, and Vienna in 2014, the catastrophic consequences of one or more accidental or intentional nuclear detonations on the environment, ecosystems, climate change, development, global health and food security, in addition to the other risks associated with the existence of nuclear weapons, were demonstrated through scientific data and analysis.

At the Vienna Conference, Austria pledged to take steps to fill the legal gap for the stigmatization and prohibition of nuclear weapons with a view to their elimination, in view of the harm that would result from an accidental or intentional nuclear detonation, and invited other
countries to do likewise. CELAC endorsed the Austrian Pledge on 29 January 2015, at the initiative of Mexico, becoming the first regional body to do so. At the time of submission of the present report, the Austrian Pledge has been endorsed by 127 countries and renamed the Humanitarian Pledge.

Although no final document was adopted at the ninth Review Conference of the Parties to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons, the review cycle had a major outcome in the form of the Humanitarian Initiative. One hundred fifty-nine countries endorsed the Pledge, which states that the basis of disarmament and non-proliferation is concern about the impact of nuclear weapons, which must not be used again under any circumstances.

Mexico welcomes the clear shift in the parameters, approach, tone and balance of the current debates regarding the humanitarian impact of nuclear weapons, and the commitment of States on the matter. The non-nuclear-weapon States today are more empowered to demand our security on an equal footing.

Mexico believes that a multilateral diplomatic process for a legally binding instrument to prohibit and eliminate nuclear weapons in a transparent, irreversible and verifiable manner within a multilaterally agreed time frame should be initiated immediately. There are various forms that such an instrument could take.

Mexico reiterates that a legally binding instrument on the prohibition and elimination of nuclear weapons should, among other things:

- Have a clearly defined scope prohibiting the development, production, acquisition, possession, stockpiling, retention, testing, use and/or transfer of all types of nuclear weapons, in any circumstances and at any time in the future, directly or indirectly through a third party, with a view to their total elimination within a specified time frame and in accordance with specific deadlines. In that connection, the content of the Treaty of Tlatelolco could be used.

- Include definitions, with the basis for negotiation being the definitions used by the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) and those used in the Treaty of Tlatelolco, particularly the definition of “nuclear weapon” in article 5.

- Provide for the irreversible prohibition and elimination of nuclear weapons.
- Provide for verification, based on existing commitments and obligations, including those in the Non-Proliferation Treaty, for which it would be useful to establish an agency of modest scale dedicated to that task or to give new powers to the IAEA, which should establish measures to build confidence between States.

- Be of indefinite duration.

- Be signed and ratified and enter into force on the simple basis of the number of States, with no restrictive clauses, along the lines of the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty.

- Be universal and open to all States, whether or not they are States Members of the United Nations.

Mexico City, 23 May 2016.