



Nuclear-Weapon-Free Zone in
Latin America and the Caribbean

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REPORT OF THE WORKING GROUP ON NUCLEAR DISARMAMENT AND NON-PROLIFERATION EDUCATION

Background

The Working-Group on Nuclear Disarmament and Non-Proliferation Education (**WGE**) was created pursuant to Resolution CG/E/Res.547 entitled “Peace and Nuclear Disarmament Education”, adopted by OPANAL General Conference at its XXI Special Session, held on 13 November 2012. This Group was open to all OPANAL Member States interested in participating.

The duties of the **WGE** were to recommend appropriate practical actions based on the proposal contained in document SG.11.2012 concerning the design of a course on “Nuclear Disarmament and Non-Proliferation Education”; and to search for resources in order to begin its implementation.

The **WGE** submitted its report (Doc. SG.28.2013) at the XXIII Regular Session of the General Conference, held in Buenos Aires, Argentina, on 21-22 August 2013. In Resolution CG/Res.556, the General Conference resolved to welcome the recommendations of the Group and to renew its mandate in order to complete the design and contents of the *Course on Nuclear Disarmament and Non-Proliferation Education*. It also resolved that “*the Working Group shall submit to the General Conference at its next session, in 2014, a progress report.*”

Development of the work

The **WGE** identified potential instructors for the Course. It attempted to involve nuclear disarmament and non-proliferation experts within the region, considering geographical representation. By 11 August 2013, the **WGE** had identified 11 instructors, who were invited

to participate in the course by letter S-19451. They also received all the information related to the technical specifications of the necessary educational materials.

Concurrently, the course proposal was circulated to Member States with the expectation to receive information of potential instructors.

As a result, the Cuban Embassy in Mexico presented a proposal by letter number 006. The **WGE** assessed this proposal and decided to include Ambassador Rodolfo Benitez Versón, Deputy Director of Multilateral Affairs of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Cuba, in the instructors list. To this end, it was necessary to adjust the contents previously suggested by the **WGE**. Moreover, the Peruvian Embassy in Mexico also presented a proposal, which was also accepted, and it was decided to include Dr Elizabeth Salmón in the instructors list. Once again, the contents had to be adjusted.

In this phase, the **WGE** held four sessions (on 27/09/2013; 20/11/2013; 29/05/2014 and 25/09/2014). Between September 2013 and September 2014, the Secretariat of the Agency received confirmation from three invited instructors, but only two of them submitted their (educational) material.

It is worth noting that, the current Secretary-General of the Agency participated in the sessions of the Group after he took office in February 2014. Previously, the Members of the Group continued to monitor its works, together with the Pro-Tempore Presidency of the Council. The latter was in charge of the functions of the Secretariat while a new Secretary-General was appointed.

At the penultimate meeting (29/05/2014), the Secretary-General assessed with the **WGE** the limited progress made in the structure of the course, both as regards to the response provided by the invited instructors, and to the submission of materials to feed the technology platform agreed with the Latin American Institute of Educational Communication (ILCE).

It was recalled that during the first phase of the works of the **WGE**, the efforts with ILCE were focused on the assessment to determine the requirements of the online course and on the adjustment of the proposal of contents. Such contents should be subject to a certain amount of hours and modules based on educational appropriate. These efforts were also focused on the design of the platform and the uploading of materials.

To this end, on 31 July 2013, OPANAL signed a Specific Collaboration Agreement with ILCE for the assessment and development of the platform for the online course. This Agreement was engaged under the Framework Agreement signed at the XXI Special Session of the General Conference held in November 2012. The Specific Agreement established a schedule of activities aimed at implementing the course during the first half of 2014, for which, OPANAL committed a total amount of \$117,000 MXN.

OPANAL covered 50% of the amount in 2013. The outstanding half was scheduled to be paid on 1 July 2014. However, due to the lack of response from the invited instructors, the **WGE** and the Council were presented with alternatives to carry out these commitments. The continuity of the implementation of the course had to be carefully evaluated by the **WGE** and the Council, considering the multiple elements that have an impact on the project and are out of the control of the Agency.

At its 288th Regular Session (19/06/2014), the Council discussed the progress in the preparations for the course, particularly the status of the financial commitments with ILCE. Regarding the latter, the Council decided, as a temporary and transitional measure, to instruct the Secretary-General to send a letter to Dr Guillermo Kelley Salinas, ILCE Director-General, explaining that *“for now, the second payment would not be made until clear progress be made in the preparations for the course (...)”*¹.

In letter dated 25 June 2014 (S-19707), the Secretary-General requested ILCE Director-General *“to temporarily suspend the scope and commitments of the Specific Agreement (S/Inf.1109) since I was instructed by the Council to review, with the Working Group on Education, the possibilities to make progress in the integration of the course materials, prior to making a final decision on the continuity of the course, or even, to assess the convenience of presenting a proposal to reallocate the committed resources to different activities in which ILCE may support OPANAL.”*

The Council and the **WGE** agreed that it was appropriate that the Secretary-General contacted the invited instructors again in order to confirm if they were still committed to participate and send their respective materials. All subsequent decisions would depend on the response of the instructors.

By letter dated 24 July 2014 (S-19472), the Secretary-General requested instructors to confirm their willingness to collaborate in the course. In the event of a positive response, instructors were also required to provide the dates for submission of materials. The Secretary-General received the confirmation of only three instructors, in addition to the three instructors who had previously accepted the invitation. However, they neither submitted their materials, nor provided a date for submission.

The Secretary-General reported all the above to the **WGE** at its 7th Session, held on 25 September 2014. Therefore, the **WGE** concluded that there are no conditions to continue with the implementation of the course under the circumstances described in this Report.

¹ Summary record of the 288th Regular Session of the Council of OPANAL, held on 19 June 2014 at OPANAL Headquarters. Document C/AR/288Rev., page 8. Available on www.opanal.org

Recommendations

1. - The Working-Group on Nuclear Disarmament and Non-Proliferation Education considers that, currently, it is unfeasible to implement the course "Nuclear Disarmament and Non-Proliferation Education" due to a lack of necessary pedagogical materials and participation by instructors.
2. - The **WGE** acknowledges that, in order to contribute to education and outreach on matters of nuclear disarmament and non-proliferation, there are other actions within the scope of the capabilities of the Secretariat of OPANAL. Among these are efforts already implemented in collaboration with academic institutions or in discussion forums promoted by governmental and non-governmental organisations engaged in education for peace.
3. – In light of the above, the **WGE** very respectfully recommends to the General Conference to terminate the mandate of the Working Group on Nuclear Disarmament and Non-Proliferation Education for the development of an online course of OPANAL.
4. – The **WGE** also recommends to the Secretary-General to continue to implement actions aimed at nuclear disarmament and non-proliferation education by means of practical measures according to the technological and financial capabilities of OPANAL.
5. – The **WGE** reiterates the importance of interinstitutional collaboration in multiplying education and outreach efforts and recommends maintaining the institutional relationship with the Latin American Institute of Educational Communication (ILCE). To this end, the Secretary-General may present concrete measures to ILCE in order to strengthen future outreach programmes of OPANAL.