Follow the weasel…

…on a magical journey through reason and logic, in pursuit of our mutual goal of a world free of nuclear weapons.

Hello there! We weasels are sincerely committed to nuclear disarmament. Our genuine concern about the humanitarian consequences of nuclear weapons underpins everything we do to advance this goal.

On the other hand, we have to take security considerations and the international situation into account – which is our weaselly way of saying that we rely on nuclear weapons for our national security, and don’t want anything that might oblige us to change that, while at the same time we don’t want to give the impression that it’s OK for other states to decide that they need nuclear weapons for their national security, as obviously that would undermine the NPT.

The NPT is the cornerstone of the nuclear disarmament and non-proliferation regime. There is, however, no international legal regime for the prohibition and elimination of nuclear weapons. Such a regime does not exist. On the other hand, there is no legal gap with respect to the prohibition and elimination of nuclear weapons. Everything is just fine as it is, and we must move forward together to achieve that.

What does this mean for the OEWG report? We believe that any legal measure recommendation arising from this OEWG should not replicate what is already in existence. Why proceed with a legal measure, which will not have any prospect of engaging possessor states, but which we know duplicates binding legal commitments for the 185 other states party to the NPT – and which also may inconveniently close the NPT loopholes that allow us to rely on the nuclear weapons of others?
Instead of replicating legal measures, we advocate replicating recommendations. The recommendations made at the 1995, 2000 and 2010 NPT review conferences have been proved to be safe and convenient over many years. Why not start with them?

Given the existing polarization in the disarmament community, as well as the dysfunctional CD and Disarmament Commission, we need to focus now more than ever on what is effective and achievable. Replicating old recommendations for things like early entry-into-force of the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty and commencement of negotiations on a Fissile Material Cut-Off Treaty is effective, because it looks like progress while avoiding the need for us to do anything about our reliance on nuclear weapons, or to start difficult conversations with our allies. And it’s obviously achievable, because it’s been achieved several times already.

We are not talking of recycled ideas, but rather ideas that have a good chance of succeeding, and will still have just as a good a chance of succeeding after another 20 years. We are not talking of maintaining the status quo, but of finding ways that avoid moving forward when we know the path is difficult and uneven.

We have a road map – so walk with us, walk with the weasels, towards creating the conditions for a world free of nuclear weapons, in full accordance with the NPT, including Article VI, in a step-by-step and verifiable way that promotes international stability, and is based on the principle of undiminished security for all.