

**Nuclear disarmament and general and complete disarmament** by Randy Rydell, Senior Political Affairs Officer, United Nations, New York, New York, USA. **Abstract:** The goal of “general and complete disarmament” has been deliberated in the international community for eight decades. It has been on the agenda of the UN General Assembly for almost 50 years and remains the “ultimate goal” of multilateral disarmament efforts. It appears in a dozen multilateral disarmament-related treaties and even some bilateral strategic nuclear agreements. Yet the goal is not widely understood and is often dismissed as utopian. This article clarifies the meaning of this term, shows how it has evolved in disarmament activities at the United Nations, discusses the goal’s relationship to nuclear disarmament, considers some implications, and concludes by underscoring its continuing value and relevance as a guide to action in the field of disarmament, for states and non-state actors alike.