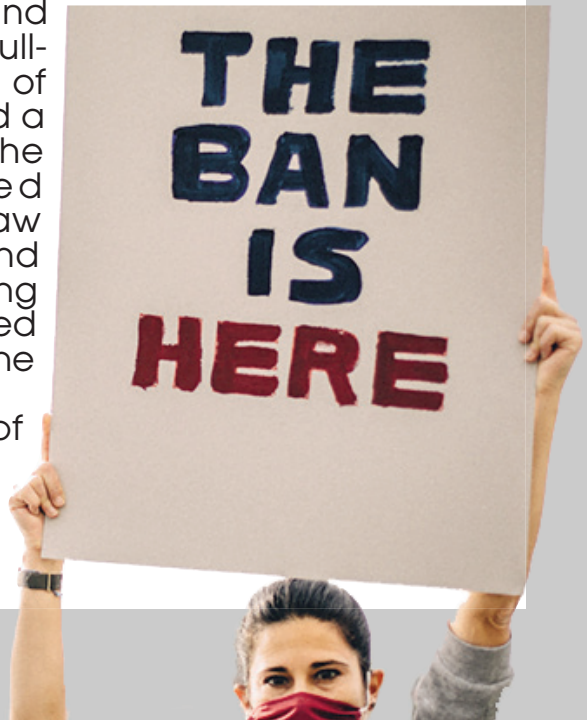


The Second Meeting of States Parties to the Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons

New York, 27 November – 1 December 2023

The non-nuclear majority met in New York between 27 November and 1 December 2023 for the Second Meeting of States Parties (2MSP) to the Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons (TPNW). This coming together was not simply 'non-nuclear' but decidedly anti-nuclear in outlook and approach. The TPNW represents many things: a 'work in progress', a part of international law, a mechanism for the eventual abolition of nuclear weapons and similar. What it represents politically, at the time of coming into force and since, is a full-frontal rejection of 'nuclearism' and a challenge to the nuclear-armed world. 2MSP saw discussion and decision making on how to embed this aspect of the Treaty.

The theme of 'universalisation' was prominent at 2MSP, with working papers,



proposals and speeches addressing the concept.

In an early 'thematic debate', a representative of the International Committee of the Red Cross outlined some of what this could mean. For example, highlighting and embedding the anti-nuclear consensus that any nuclear use would have an enormous humanitarian impact; being clear that nuclear possession is "not exceptional" and does not stand above and beyond international law.

A working paper submitted by the government of Austria goes into more detail, with specific reference to concepts of security: "the argument that opponents of the Treaty frequently employ in their criticism of the Treaty is that it 'does not take today's security environment into account' or that 'the security environment is not conducive to nuclear disarmament'." In response to these 'arguments', Austria is clear that "there has been little readiness by opponents of the Treaty, especially by the nuclear-armed States, to engage constructively with the legitimate security concerns formulated in and through the Treaty." What does this mean? That States Parties to the TPNW are not simply rejecting nuclear-weapon possession for the obvious moral and ethical reasons but because they fully reject the 'security' arguments of nuclear-possessor states and are clear that the destructive humanitarian impact of any nuclear use must be fully recognised and accounted for.

The following collection of excerpts from speeches and working papers submitted to 2MSP documents 'where we are now' on the road to nuclear abolition and points the way to future work.

Tom Unterrainer

Humanitarian consequences of nuclear weapons use and testing

In the Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons, the catastrophic humanitarian consequences that would result from any use of nuclear weapons, as well as the unacceptable harm to and suffering of individuals affected by nuclear weapon testing, are recognized. The Treaty provides highlights of the disproportionate impacts of nuclear weapons on Indigenous Peoples and women and girls, as well as the possible impact of such weapons on future generations. Also recognized in the Treaty is the imperative for addressing environmental contamination owing to the testing or use of nuclear weapons.

In the present section, current scientific knowledge of the humanitarian consequences of nuclear weapons use and testing is discussed. Some open questions are identified for future scientific research that would support the goals of the Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons and its implementation.

Consequences of nuclear weapons use

In Japan, the bombings of the cities of Hiroshima and Nagasaki on 6 and 9 August 1945, respectively, released explosive energies estimated at 16 and 21 kiloton equivalent of TNT, respectively. There remain uncertainties as to the number of deaths from the intense heat generated by the nuclear fireball, blast injuries and exposure to ionizing radiation – the estimates vary by a factor of about two. Early United States military estimates suggested that about 110,000 people died in the two cities, while in later independent research, 210,000 deaths were estimated. The immediate physical impact was the

Excerpts (section 51-70) from the Report of the Scientific Advisory Group, issued 27 October 2023. The full version of this report, with extensive notes and references, is available at reachingcriticalwill.org

near total destruction of urban infrastructure and widespread fires extending to kilometre distances. A modern thermonuclear weapon, typically with a yield of hundreds of kilotons equivalent of TNT, exploded on an urban target would produce blast damage and prompt radiation effects and ignite a firestorm extending to much larger distances. For such weapons, the firestorm would extend significantly farther than the blast and would prompt lethal radiation effects.

Many of the studies of the longer-term effects of ionizing radiation on the human body have relied on studying survivors of the above-mentioned bombings in Japan, the *hibakusha*. In the studies, the radiation dose received by individuals has been considered on the basis of their location at the time of the explosion, and it has been suggested that radiation exposure increased the risk of cancers and other non-cancer diseases (cataracts, heart disease and stroke, among others). Furthermore, the percentage of cancer deaths attributable to radiation increases with dose, and there are higher risks for younger individuals and women. There remain open questions about the social and psychological impacts of radiation exposure on individuals with the passage of time after the initial exposure.

Decades of scientific studies based on an improved understanding of nuclear weapon effects, prevailing nuclear weapon doctrines and known military, industrial, political and demographic targets suggest that a nuclear war could lead to tens of millions of immediate casualties. It would be impossible to meet the medical needs of the tens of millions of injured people. Casualties would not be limited to areas near the intended targets, as explosions aimed at destroying hardened military structures could lead to lethal doses from radioactive fallout received by population centres hundreds of kilometres away.

Beginning in the 1980s, scientists proposed that nuclear war could cause hemispheric or global-scale cooling of the atmosphere, a phenomenon known as “nuclear winter”. Weapons exploding in or near cities, industrial complexes or forests cause extensive fires, producing enough heat and smoke to inject large amounts of soot into even the stratosphere, where it absorbs a significant amount of incoming solar radiation and has a residence time on the order of several years. This causes a significant decrease in near-surface temperatures over at least one hemisphere, leading to widespread failure of crops and dramatic reductions in the availability of food.

A recent study using a state-of-the art climate model showed that stratospheric injection of between 5 million and 150 million metric tons of

soot could result from conflicts ranging from limited to full-scale nuclear war between the United States and the Russian Federation. The resulting change in surface temperatures would lead to mass food shortages in almost all countries in the full-scale nuclear war scenario. In the study, it is estimated that between 250 million and 5 billion people could starve to death. Injection of 150 million metric tons of soot would also cause massive changes in global ocean circulation and chemical composition, as well as in marine ecosystems, probably lasting decades near the surface and hundreds of years in the deep ocean. It is projected that sea ice could spread into some populated coastal areas for perhaps thousands of years.

These recent assessments recognize that a more complete understanding of the broader implications of nuclear war for the planet's human population, environment, ecosystems and species is needed. This includes assessing how societies, crops, natural ecosystems and insect communities, including pollinators, would react to a sudden sustained decrease in temperature, as well as changes in surface ozone, ultraviolet radiation, precipitation and fresh water, and to radioactive contamination. There also is a need to better assess disruption of food distribution and trade after nuclear war and how individual and collective human behaviour might change.

In 2021, the United States Congress asked the National Academy of Sciences of the United States to “review the potential environmental effects and socio-economic consequences that could unfold in the weeks-to-decades following nuclear wars, exploring scenarios ranging from small-scale regional nuclear exchanges to large-scale exchanges between major powers”. Recently, a few research groups in Europe and North America began to carry out a similar interdisciplinary study. Comprehensive new assessments are needed to complement these studies and to investigate specifically the complex interaction between environmental and societal effects of nuclear weapon use.

A global scientific study on the climatic, environmental, physical and social effects in the weeks to decades following nuclear war, mandated in a General Assembly resolution, would be timely and useful. There has been no such United Nations-mandated study in more than 30 years. The three precedents for Assembly resolutions and studies on the effects of nuclear weapons and nuclear war date from the 1960s, 1970s and 1980s. The most recent of these, carried out in accordance with Assembly resolution 40/152 G, was published in 1989 as a study. A new, twenty-first-century study could be focused on the impacts on current local, national, regional and global socioeconomic and political systems, supply chains,

health care, food and energy systems and natural ecosystems. It could also analyse whether and how the interactions of these different physical, environmental and social effects over various timescales might lead to cascading humanitarian consequences. The study could potentially be completed in time for the first Review Conference of the Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons.

Consequences of nuclear testing

The development of nuclear arsenals has relied extensively on nuclear weapon testing, resulting in widespread dispersion of radioactive fallout and leading to environmental contamination and population exposures. A total of 2,056 nuclear tests, with a combined yield of about 510 megatons of TNT equivalent, were conducted between 1945 and 2017, including 528 atmospheric tests with a combined yield of about 440 megatons between 1945 and 1980.

Nuclear weapons have been tested in Africa (nuclear testing by France in Algeria), Asia (nuclear testing by the Soviet Union in Kazakhstan, Novaya Zemlya, Turkmenistan and Uzbekistan; nuclear testing by China in western China; and nuclear testing by India, Pakistan and the Democratic People's Republic of Korea on national territory), Europe (nuclear testing by the Soviet Union in Ukraine and Russia), North America (nuclear testing by the United States and the United Kingdom in the continental United States) and Oceania (nuclear testing by the United Kingdom in Australia; and nuclear testing by France, the United Kingdom and the United States throughout the Pacific, including Kiribati, Marshall Islands and French Polynesia).

Estimates of the global collective radiation dose received by people as a result of atmospheric nuclear tests began with the pioneering work of Linus Pauling and Andrei Sakharov in the 1950s. A recent estimate suggests that several million people may eventually suffer serious harm from just the radioactive carbon-14 in the nuclear fallout from those tests.

From the 1960s onward, the United Nations Scientific Committee on the Effects of Atomic Radiation estimated and re-estimated the cumulative effective radiation dose equivalent to the past, current and future population from nuclear testing. The most recent such Scientific Committee assessment, made in 2000, pointed to a lack of systematic and comprehensive reconstruction of the impact of nuclear weapon testing on communities and individuals at the local and regional levels.

Studies of communities living downwind of test sites have revealed evidence of increased risks for certain cancers and mental health disorders

that are associated with the condition of living in or near contaminated areas. Some communities also experience loss of land and relocation, or the occupation of contaminated areas at or near the former test sites. New research in the rapidly evolving field of epigenetics may significantly advance understanding of the health and environmental consequences of exposure to nuclear radiation beyond the level of genetic mutations, to include possible transgenerational effects. A new assessment by the United Nations Scientific Committee on the Effects of Atomic Radiation leveraging two decades of additional scientific literature would be useful.

There are overlapping areas of scientific research between the Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons and the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty. They include source terms for nuclear explosions (the amount of radionuclides, along with their spatial and particle size distribution, following a particular explosion); atmospheric transport modelling and deposition of radionuclides; the reconstruction of sources from monitoring data; and technical knowledge and experience regarding contamination measurements. The approaches being used in on-site inspection activities related to the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty at test sites may also be useful in the context of the Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons. Working with the Preparatory Commission for the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty Organization could strengthen the general technical capacity of States Parties to the Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons in the field of environmental radioactivity and with respect to the consequences of nuclear weapon explosions.

Research on the radiological and environmental legacy of nuclear testing at the local and regional levels would support the positive obligations of the Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons. Such research would benefit from improved capabilities for modelling the atmospheric transport of radionuclides. The availability of high-quality atmospheric re-analyses covering the entire period of atmospheric use and testing now allows for detailed, regional-scale consequence modelling of past events. Furthermore, historical ambient measurement data from nuclear-armed States are being declassified, and techniques for the investigation of environmental radioactive contamination have become more easily available and more sensitive.

States parties to the Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons, other States and international organizations, such as the World Meteorological Organization and its members, possess legacy data from nuclear fallout-monitoring programmes during and after the period of atmospheric testing. Taking stock of and making these data easily accessible would be valuable.

The data could be shared in a common public archive that could be managed by a United Nations body. This is another topic of common interest to States members of the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty.

New research on the capability of and best practices for providing assistance to victims of nuclear testing, including medical care, rehabilitation and psychological support, can complement studies on the humanitarian effects of testing. Further research to improve understanding of the different and disproportionate impacts of nuclear testing on age and gender, both at the individual level and with regard to social processes, would help to support victim assistance without discrimination. Studies are also needed to understand best practices and new options for providing equitable and sustainable social and economic inclusion for affected individuals in these communities.

Lastly, new research on the status of former nuclear test sites and on remediating radiologically contaminated environments, as well as assessments of relevant best practices, would provide significant support for efforts to meet relevant obligations and goals of the Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons. Such research could benefit from IAEA studies that are specific to the Treaty, using the best currently available technical methods. IAEA previously undertook radiological assessments at the nuclear test sites in Moruroa and Fangataufa (1998), Bikini (1998), Kazakhstan (1999) and Algeria (2005). They were preliminary studies, following a 1995 resolution of the General Conference of IAEA, that were intended to provide expert assistance in assessing the radiation risks at these former test sites and to inform decisions on remediation. They offer an important precedent for an updated and more comprehensive IAEA analysis of relevant former test sites.

Universalizing security concerns

With the adoption and entry into force of the Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons, its States parties now have a new multilateral treaty and framework at their disposal to clearly state and promote their positions on and articulate their threat perceptions regarding nuclear weapons. Central to the Treaty is its underlying rationale regarding the humanitarian consequences and risks of nuclear weapons. This rationale is supported by a growing body of scientific and expert research. New scientific evidence underscores that the consequences of nuclear weapons would be more global, cascading and catastrophic and that the risks associated with nuclear weapons are more complex than previously understood. Consequently, given the potentially global consequences of even a limited regional nuclear exchange, peoples of all States and anywhere on Earth are at considerable risk of becoming collateral damage of nuclear conflict or nuclear explosions. The evidence is, thus, becoming ever more compelling that the security of all humanity is diminished by the continued possession of and reliance on nuclear weapons by nuclear-armed States.

The Treaty, thus, not only articulates legitimate security concerns that are widely shared among the non-nuclear majority of States but also fundamentally challenges the very calculus that security can ever be based in a sustainable, responsible and legitimate way on the persistent threat of global mass destruction. In short, the Treaty's rationale challenges the security arguments in favour of nuclear deterrence that are difficult to prove and many of which are based on assumptions, with the

Working Paper submitted to the Second Meeting of States Parties by the Government of Austria

scientific evidence on the humanitarian consequences and risks of nuclear weapons, if nuclear deterrence fails. This leads to the conclusion that nuclear weapons diminish the security of all States and all humanity.

Nevertheless, the argument that opponents of the Treaty frequently employ in their criticism of the Treaty is that it “does not take today’s security environment into account” or that “the security environment is not conducive to nuclear disarmament”. So far, there has been little readiness by opponents of the Treaty, especially by the nuclear-armed States, to engage constructively with the legitimate security concerns formulated in and through the Treaty – or readiness to acknowledge that disarmament, including through instruments such as the Treaty, promotes collective, national and human security. While the concern about the humanitarian consequences is acknowledged, it is seen and used as an argument that underpins the effectiveness of nuclear deterrence. Similarly, reducing nuclear risks is promoted by nuclear-armed States as an important area of work, but the discussion is framed in a narrow manner that leaves out nuclear risks that result from the very possession of nuclear weapons and the practice of nuclear deterrence.

In short, this points to a fundamental disconnect between the arguments about security, humanitarian consequences and nuclear risks put forward by the nuclear-armed States and their allies and the arguments about the nuclear insecurity and the compelling scientific evidence on the humanitarian consequences and risks of nuclear weapons on which the Treaty is based.

One of the key political challenges for the Treaty community and for the Treaty’s universalization for the future will therefore be twofold:

- (a) How to better promote and articulate the legitimate security concerns and threat and risk perceptions resulting from nuclear weapons and nuclear deterrence enshrined in the Treaty;
- (b) How to further develop arguments to challenge the security paradigm based on nuclear deterrence by highlighting and promoting the new scientific evidence about the humanitarian consequences and risks of nuclear weapons and juxtaposing this with the risks and assumptions that are inherent in nuclear deterrence.

This will need to be pursued through a discursive and political process that will be challenging and require patience but that is, nevertheless, more urgent than ever given the precarious state of the nuclear disarmament and non-proliferation regime and the high level of nuclear risks. It will also be

crucial for the universalization prospects of the Treaty. A coherent and more joined-up approach, refining the argumentation and drawing on the latest scientific research available, will also assist States parties and signatories in better developing their positions and statements in relevant forums to ensure that the often apparent strength of pro-nuclear weapons views held by only a minority of States in international forums can be effectively challenged.

Austria therefore proposes that the intersessional period between the second and third Meetings of States Parties be used to develop a comprehensive set of arguments and recommendations on the above-cited points under paragraph 5 (a) and (b) in a consultative process among States parties and signatories, with the involvement of the Scientific Advisory Group, the International Committee of the Red Cross, the International Campaign to Abolish Nuclear Weapons and other stakeholders and experts. Appropriate forums for engagement with opponents of the Treaty should also be explored. Austria would, thus, propose to appoint a coordinator to consult and prepare a report for the third Meeting of States Parties with arguments and recommendations regarding points (a) and (b) above for consideration by States parties at the third Meeting. This effort should be coordinated with the activities undertaken in the context of the informal working group on universalization.

Averting catastrophic consequences

“Our commitment to upholding the prohibition of nuclear weapons and averting catastrophic consequences”

1. We, the States Parties to the Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons, have gathered for the second Meeting of States Parties in steadfast determination to address the existential threat to humanity posed by nuclear weapons and to uphold our commitment to their prohibition and complete elimination. We welcome the broad participation of signatory States and observer States, as well as other observers, civil society representatives, the scientific community, and survivors of nuclear weapons use and testing ...

5. The Treaty currently stands strong with 93 signatories and 69 States Parties. We renew our call for all States that have not yet done so to sign and ratify or accede to the Treaty without delay. We will continue to pursue universalization of the Treaty as one of our priorities ...

8. Nuclear risks are being exacerbated in particular by the continued and increasing salience of and emphasis on nuclear weapons in military postures and doctrines, coupled with the on-going qualitative modernization and quantitative increases in nuclear arsenals, and the heightening of tensions. We cannot stand idly by while signs indicate that humanity is moving closer to global nuclear catastrophe at this dangerous inflection point.

9. We reaffirm our grave concern about the catastrophic humanitarian consequences of

Excerpts from the revised draft declaration of the second Meeting of States Parties on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons, issued 1 December 2023.

nuclear weapons, which cannot be adequately addressed, transcend national borders, pose grave implications for human survival and well-being and would be incompatible with respect for the right to life. Nuclear weapons inflict catastrophic destruction, and unspeakable suffering and death. Their use would have long-term damage to the environment, socioeconomic and sustainable development, the global economy, food security and the health of current and future generations, including the disproportionate impact nuclear weapons have on women and girls.

10. The catastrophic humanitarian consequences and risks associated with nuclear weapons underpin the moral and ethical imperatives for nuclear disarmament and the urgency of achieving and maintaining a nuclear-weapon free world, which among other drivers, inspired the creation of the Treaty and guide its implementation. These considerations must be at the center of all disarmament policies, highlighting the human cost of nuclear weapons and the need to protect human life and the environment.

11. Past use and testing of nuclear weapons have clearly demonstrated the unacceptable humanitarian and environmental consequences and ongoing legacies caused by their uncontrollable destructive capability and indiscriminate nature. We thus reaffirm our support for addressing the harms of nuclear weapons use and testing, including through the TPNW's positive obligations.

12. New scientific research has underscored the multifaceted and cascading effects of the catastrophic humanitarian impact of nuclear weapons and associated risks. This growing and compelling scientific evidence should be broadened further, including scientific information on those effects that are still not understood in their entirety, and already warrants urgent policy responses at the international level.

13. The continued existence of nuclear weapons and lack of meaningful progress on disarmament undermine the security of all States, aggravate international tensions, heighten the risk of nuclear catastrophe and pose an existential threat to humanity as a whole. The only guarantee against the use of nuclear weapons is their complete elimination and the legally binding assurance that they will never be developed again.

17. Far from preserving peace and security, nuclear weapons are used as instruments of policy, linked to coercion, intimidation and heightening of

tensions. The renewed advocacy, insistence on and attempts to justify nuclear deterrence as a legitimate security doctrine gives false credence to the value of nuclear weapons for national security and dangerously increases the risk of horizontal and vertical nuclear proliferation.

18. We regret the growing reliance on nuclear weapons in military and security concepts, doctrines and policies. There are now more States under extended nuclear security guarantees and nuclear stationing arrangements than when we last met. Any tendency towards the erosion of the nuclear disarmament and non-proliferation regime is of concern. We are disturbed by any placement of nuclear weapons on the territory of non-nuclear-armed States. The TPNW clearly prohibits receiving the transfer of, or control over, nuclear weapons or to allow their stationing, installation or deployment. We urge all States with such nuclear arrangements to put an end to them, and join the Treaty.

19. The perpetuation and implementation of nuclear deterrence in military and security concepts, doctrines and policies not only erodes and contradicts non-proliferation, but also obstructs progress towards nuclear disarmament.

20. This is not only a security issue. In a world where challenges persist in meeting basic human needs, the investment of substantial financial resources in modernizing and expanding nuclear arsenals is indefensible and counterproductive as it comes at the expense of investment in sustainable development for genuine human wellbeing, as well as disarmament, education, diplomacy, environmental protection, and health ...

29. Recognizing the immense contribution of nuclear-weapons-free zones to nuclear disarmament, non-proliferation and enhancing international peace and security, we call upon States Parties to the treaties establishing such zones which have not yet done so, to join the TPNW without delay in recognition of the shared basis of such treaties and the TPNW and to enhance mutually-reinforcing cooperation. We also recognize the importance of the continued strengthening of all existing nuclear-weapon-free zones, inter alia, through the ratification of existing treaties and relevant protocols and the withdrawal or revision of any reservations or interpretative declarations contrary to the object and purpose of the treaties establishing such zones, and of the creation of such zones in areas where they do not currently exist, including in the Middle East.

30. We, as States Parties to the TPNW, highlight the importance of continuing progress in the universalization and full implementation of these complementary instruments and prevent regression. Work will continue with all States, including through open discourse with those with reservations about the TPNW, and other stakeholders on work surrounding complementarity.

31. We unequivocally affirm that our commitment to the TPNW and its object and purpose remains unaffected when completing fulfilment of obligations emanating from treaties previously subscribed to, where these do not conflict with obligations of the TPNW. We shall take all necessary measures for effective implementation of the purposes and objectives of this Treaty and will continue to review our international and bilateral obligations in order to ensure consistency with regard to the Treaty and its object and purpose. We call on all non-States-Parties to refrain from any activities that could have an adverse impact on the implementation of the object and purpose of the Treaty ...

34. In light of a global climate characterized by a deficit of trust, we reaffirm the need to build confidence among all members of the international community. As such, we are equally unambiguous on our willingness to work collaboratively with all States, in concerted action to achieve and maintain a world free of nuclear weapons.

35. We, the States Parties to the TPNW, will not stand by as spectators to increasing nuclear risks and the dangerous perpetuation of nuclear deterrence. We are resolutely committed to the universalization and effective implementation of the Treaty and the fulfilment of the Vienna Action Plan. We will work relentlessly to achieve a world free of nuclear weapons for the sake of current and future generations. We undertake and recommit to ensure that nuclear weapons are never again used, tested or threatened to be used, under any circumstances, and will not rest until they are completely eliminated.

Some statements and speeches

States parties, observers (including NATO member states) and civil society representatives delivered a large number of statements and speeches to the Second Meeting of States Parties. These excerpts illustrate the diversity of views and approaches to nuclear abolition.

The State of Palestine

We ... affirm that the nuclear-weapons States bear all responsibility for our collective security and have an obligation to eliminate all their nuclear weapons without conditions. We also express our deep concern over the efforts of these countries to develop their nuclear arsenals and increase their military spending ...

The Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons has been keen to highlight and emphasize the catastrophic effects that such weapons can have on humanity and the natural environment ... Accordingly, the State of Palestine renews its categorical rejection of the threat of use of nuclear weapons from any side against any party ... the latest one was issued by an extremist official in the Israeli occupation government, which did not only violate all international and humanitarian laws, rules and norms in its brutal aggression on the Gaza Strip but uses internationally prohibited weapons against the defenceless Palestinian people ... Therefore, we must also reiterate that the only solution is to remove the danger ...

In another context, the State of Palestine welcomes the convening of the fourth session of the Conference on the Establishment of a Weapons of Mass Destruction Free Zone in the Middle East. We also welcome the outcomes adopted at this session which build on the findings of the previous sessions, which indicates the determination of the participating parties to achieve a nuclear-weapons-free zone. Therefore, we renew our call on Israel not to isolate itself by boycotting these noble regional efforts to establish an empty zone.

We also call on them to abandon all their undeclared nuclear activities, subjecting its nuclear facilities to the comprehensive safeguards regime of the International Atomic Energy Agency ...

[P]ossession of nuclear weapons is neither a legal right nor an entitlement. Eliminating them is a responsibility. Moral, political and legal.

Indigenous Peoples

We, Indigenous World Association, UN NGO, and Tewa Women United speak our truth as Indigenous Peoples throughout the world who have been directly impacted by the violent weaponization of energy. The energy of life given to humankind has been turned into the creation of the Atomic Bomb: weapon of mass destruction and death.

The era of “He who controls the ultimate weapon of death from above shall rule the world”. The shock and paralysis of “Fear for your life” has been hanging over our hearts for too long. No more. NO more use of how many deaths make the detonators the ruling force! As a global family, we need to reclaim our rights to life and to live harmoniously with air, lands, waters, trees and animals of the world.

Nuclear energy knows no boundaries if it is not disarmed and neutralized. We will all perish without clean air, water, and land. We, the ones who have witnessed the creation of the first atomic bomb in our once pristine wooded Jemez mountains, know the smell of death since 1945. It was in secret cities like Los Alamos, New Mexico, USA that began the poisoning of minds with nuclear imperialism.

The nuclear bomb was built on the indigenous lands of San Ildefonso Pueblo and tested in Mescalero Apache tribal land. The plutonium work for the weapon was carried out on Wanapum and Yakima Nations in Washington State. The weapons underwent testing on the land of the Western Shoshone Tribe in Nevada which was a violation of the Treaty of Ruby Valley. Uranium for both atomic weapons and nuclear power was extracted from the lands of the Navajo people in New Mexico.

We, the Indigenous People, know full well the pains and sufferings done under colonialism and now nuclear colonialism. In an unrestrained power system dominated by white supremacy, lacking mutual accountability, the result is an increased risk of death from nuclear bombing.

Nuclear colonialism continues. Indigenous lands that are used for the Los Alamos National Laboratory are now contaminated by radioactive pollutants such as plutonium, tritium, chromium, perchlorate and toxic heavy metals. Moreover, nuclear bomb testing continues to impact both

the lands and the people in Nevada, rendering a significant portion of their territories unusable. The people are dying from cancers and face cardiovascular illnesses, liver, and kidney failures.

Uranium is needed to start the nuclear industrial chain. Between the 1950s to the 1990s, Uranium mining took place on the tribal lands of the Laguna Pueblo and Navajo people in New Mexico. Over 500 legacy radioactive uranium mines still exist in New Mexico including the Grants Mining District. The radioactive mill tailings cover hundreds of acres and emit radon gas that contaminates soil and underground deep source aquifers. After three decades, the water plumes carrying radioactive toxins persist in motion, and entities who own the mills remain unable to remediate the affected land and water. Individuals who reside around these locations continue to be impacted and succumb to illnesses caused by nuclear exposure.

A case illustrating the severe radioactive effects on the Navajo people is evident at the Red Water Pond Road community near Church Rock, New Mexico. For decades, the United Nuclear Corporation carried out uranium mining and milling in the region. There were Navajo families who resided within proximity of less than 5 miles from the uranium mining sites and less than 1 mile from uranium mill tailings. Those people breathe and walk on radioactive affected dirt every day. Women and children living there are affected far more than men by radioactivity. The University of New Mexico conducted the Birth Cohort Study that investigated the presence of radioactive elements in the bodies of newborns and their mothers.

In conclusion, our emphasis has been on highlighting how the use of uranium in the nuclear fuel chain, both presently and in the near future, adversely impacts all people and life on Mother Earth. Radioactivity poses dangerous effects from uranium production, from nuclear energy, from nuclear bomb making and testing. Indigenous Peoples are demanding no more nuclear weapons, no more nuclear bomb testing. And NO use of nuclear energy for climate change. It is still bombing from above. It is still adding to death. Keep uranium in the ground.

Republic of Cuba

We are proud that our region, which was the first Nuclear-Weapon-Free Zone in a densely populated area and was subsequently proclaimed a Zone of Peace, has the largest number of States parties to the TPNW ...

The adoption and entry into force of this instrument was a milestone. By categorically outlawing the existence, use and threat of use of nuclear weapons and all types of nuclear testing, this Treaty became the first

international legal norm to codify the illegitimacy and illegality of such weapons into international law.

The TPNW, which explicitly qualifies the use of nuclear weapons as an act contrary to international law and international humanitarian law, complements the international security, disarmament and non-proliferation architecture.

Unfortunately, we are still a long way from achieving the total elimination of these weapons. Nuclear arsenals continue to be modernized and new nuclear weapons systems deployed for potential use. Military postures and doctrines based on nuclear deterrence and so-called strategic stability persist; as well as attempts to condition nuclear disarmament and legitimize the *status quo*.

The mere existence of nuclear weapons constitutes a threat to humankind, given the continuing risk that they may be used again.

Israel's recent statements on the possible use of nuclear weapons against the Islamic Republic of Iran and the Palestinian people in Gaza are worrying. There must be an end to the warmongering rhetoric in the Middle East, which only contributes to exacerbating tensions. We demand an immediate ceasefire to stop the escalation of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict and its very serious humanitarian consequences. A comprehensive, just and lasting solution to the conflict, based on the creation of two States, that would enable the Palestinian people to exercise their right to self-determination and to have an independent and sovereign State within the pre-1967 borders, with East Jerusalem as its capital, and that would also guarantee the right of return of refugees, was urgently needed.

The world seems to have forgotten the dire consequences of the nuclear bombs dropped by the United States.

The US in 1945 raided the Japanese cities of Hiroshima and Nagasaki, unleashing terror and killing hundreds of thousands of people. It is unjustifiable that there are still nearly 13,000 nuclear weapons, of which 3,844 are deployed, ready for immediate use, more than enough to destroy the planet ...

We have the responsibility to adopt, at this meeting, important decisions to continue moving towards the effective implementation of the Treaty and its universalization. The Cuban delegation will contribute as much as possible to that end, in line with Cuba's firm commitment to nuclear disarmament, as enshrined in the Constitution of the Republic.

The Elders

Remarks by Ernesto Zedillo

It is a privilege to speak to you today on behalf of The Elders, the group founded by President Nelson Mandela to work for peace, justice, human rights, and a sustainable planet.

These values and goals are profoundly important precisely at a time when actions by many governments violate international law and undermine the multilateral system on many fronts.

This is certainly true for crucial issues such as climate change; prevention and response to pandemics; governance of economic interdependence; and international cooperation for development.

Alarming, it is also the case for international peace and security. Since the beginning of this century, repeatedly, we have seen governments ignoring diplomacy, breaching international law, and bypassing multilateral institutions.

However, perhaps the biggest existential risk for our world may stem from the unravelling of the nuclear non-proliferation and disarmament regime.

For good reason attention has been focused on recent events such as Russia's deplorable nuclear threats over Ukraine, and its suspension of participation in New START. However, we must also admit that the unravelling started as way back as 2002, when the United States withdrew unilaterally from the Anti-Ballistic Missile Treaty. It has continued ever since, including the collapse of the Intermediate-Range Nuclear Forces Treaty – again caused by a unilateral decision by the US – as well as this country's withdrawal – equally unilaterally – from the nuclear agreement with Iran.

Furthermore, nuclear arms control is perilously being eroded by the so-called modernization plans by the largest nuclear powers. Those plans comprise not only the replacement of nuclear warheads but also of missile, aircraft, and submarine delivery systems.

We are witnessing a renewed nuclear arms race disguised as a modernization undertaking – certainly a very expensive and dangerous one, which betrays the nuclear powers' disarmament obligations, not least those under Article 6 of the Non-Proliferation Treaty.

The revival of this race should remind us that the existence of nuclear weapons is a wide pathway to the end of human life. The only definitive mechanism to close that pathway is total abolition. This is why The Elders enthusiastically support the Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons.

We commend the governments that have signed and become parties to

the Treaty. And, of course, we decry the nuclear powers' refusal to engage in it constructively. We believe the Treaty to be realistic and achievable and, far from undermining, it would enhance their own security. Nevertheless, indeed with sorrow, we acknowledge that their coming to the TPNW table is still distant. It is for this reason that we have been calling for ways to at least significantly reduce the risk that nuclear weapons pose for humanity at large.

Consequently, The Elders have put forward what we call the 4 Ds plan, as a practical agenda to minimise the nuclear threat:

- **Doctrine:** All nuclear states should make an unequivocal No First Use declaration, or at a minimum that the sole purpose of nuclear weapons is for deterrence.
- **De-alerting:** The highest priority must be given to taking as many warheads as possible, if not all, off high-alert status.
- **Deployment:** Over one-quarter of the world's stockpile is operationally deployed, and this proportion should be dramatically and urgently reduced.
- **Decreased numbers:** The number of warheads in existence should be reduced from around 12,500 today to the lowest possible level, with the United States, Russia and China reducing to no more than 500 each.

Achieving this agenda would be far from ideal but would offer a safer world than the one we have now. Critically, it would move us closer to the ultimate ambition of the TPNW – that all nuclear weapons are removed from existence. The Elders encourage you all to keep working tirelessly towards this supreme objective.

Mongolia

Mongolia is dedicated to strengthening global disarmament efforts and preventing the proliferation of nuclear weapons. This commitment includes supporting crucial treaties like the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty, which is vital for international nuclear disarmament. Moreover, we actively support the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty and treaties establishing nuclear-weapon-free zones in specific regions. This approach underscores our commitment to various aspects of international efforts aimed at promoting peace, stability and preventing nuclear proliferation.

For over thirty years, Mongolia has upheld its commitment to being a nuclear-weapon-free territory, actively endorsing global initiatives for disarmament and preventing the spread of nuclear weapons. In this regard,

the creation of nuclear-weapon-free zones is a vital tool in achieving comprehensive worldwide nuclear disarmament and non-proliferation.

Our sincere endeavours to enhance regional peace and security have been consistently advancing. We are pursuing this goal through hosting of the Annual International Conference “Ulaanbaatar Dialogue on Northeast Asian Security”. Taking this opportunity, we would like to express our gratitude to Ms. Izumi Nakamitsu, the Under-Secretary-General and High Representative for Disarmament Affairs, for her participation in the 8th International Conference “Ulaanbaatar Dialogue on Northeast Asian Security” held in Ulaanbaatar in June 2023. During the conference, she emphasized that the 'Ulaanbaatar Dialogue' mechanism is evolving into a crucial platform for fostering peace and security, as well as reinforcing confidence-building measures in Northeast Asia.

In conclusion, my delegation reiterates its full commitment to continue providing unwavering support for implementing the Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons.

Center for Peace and Disarmament, People’s Solidarity for Participatory Democracy, Republic of Korea

In Northeast Asia, where I live, unfortunately most countries have not signed the TPNW yet. This year marks the 70th anniversary of the Korean War Armistice. The unstable armistice has not ended yet, and military tensions have recently risen significantly again.

Currently, on the narrow peninsula, the ROK-US frequently conduct military exercises that are one of the largest in the world. These exercises involve both cases utilizing nuclear and non-nuclear forces. The DPRK is conducting a record number of missile tests, including ICBMs. Even more dangerous is the fact that the ROK-US military alliance and the DPRK have publicized and practised a strategy of ‘preemptive strike’, which includes the use of nuclear weapons.

The Korean Peninsula has fallen into a typical security dilemma. The more governments focus on building a ‘deterrence’, the greater the risk of being attacked and the likelihood of accidental armed conflict. The level of threat is increasingly pushing towards the limit.

The 2018 inter-Korean military agreement was recently effectively scrapped. Last week, South Korea suspended some provisions of the military agreement in response to North Korea's satellite launch, and North Korea announced that it would not honour the agreement. The inter-Korean military agreement has been the minimum safeguard against armed conflict in the border area for the past five years. Worse, all

channels of communication between the two Koreas have been cut off. In such a situation, a misjudgment or mistake could lead to armed conflict, which could escalate to nuclear war.

The prospect of a 'Denuclearization of the Korean Peninsula' is fading and the nuclear threat is growing. The space for peaceful cooperation is shrinking and factional confrontation is becoming fixed. As the ROK, US, and Japan confront the DPRK, China, and Russia in the Korean Peninsula and East Asia, there is a growing risk that the conflict will become entrenched, with the Military Demarcation Line (MDL) of Korea as the frontline. Four of these six countries have nuclear weapons. The other two rely on the 'nuclear umbrella' of the US.

I'd like to point to a new study that stands out in this regard. It's the report about 'Possible Nuclear Use Cases in Northeast Asia' and 'Humanitarian Impacts of It' by APLN (Asia-Pacific Leadership Network), RECNA (Research Center for Nuclear Weapons Abolition, Nagasaki University), and the Nautilus Institute.

The study simulates a detailed scenario in which nuclear weapons could be used in Northeast Asia. According to the report, in the worst case, nuclear conflicts resulting in millions of deaths and hundreds of thousands of cancer deaths. In addition, a range of economic, social and ecological impacts would also result from these use cases.

The report points out the following. A nuclear conflict based on regional issues can escalate to a global nuclear conflict within hours or days after the first use of nuclear weapons. Many of the plausible nuclear use cases have their genesis in misinterpretation of intentions and lack of communication between countries.

So, we must act now to prevent another catastrophe. We need early warning of possible armed conflict on the Korean Peninsula and nuclear war. The international community must unitedly call on the ROK, US, and the DPRK to immediately cease military threats against each other and restore channels of dialogue. The ROK and US, which have an overwhelming advantage in economic and military power over the DPRK, should take preemptive measures to reduce military threats. We cannot solve the problem by demonizing the DPRK and imposing sanctions and pressure. We should remember that the DPRK had maintained a moratorium on nuclear and ICBM tests for four years while talks and negotiations were underway. Denuclearization of the Korean Peninsula can only be achieved through resolving the hostile relations and trust-building between the parties to the Korean War.

This will also create an enabling environment for the establishment of a

Nuclear-Weapon-Free Zone in Northeast Asia and all states in the region joining the TPNW. The spirit of the TPNW should be universalized to all countries that have not yet joined the treaty. The voices of us who are here now are more important than ever.

Germany

As a non-member to the TPNW and observer of this 2nd MSP, Germany would like to offer its perspective and engage in a serious and frank discussion on avenues for progress towards a safe world free of nuclear weapons.

In our new National Security Strategy, Germany has reaffirmed its commitment to strive towards a safe world free of nuclear weapons. We share the global ambition to get there, and to redouble efforts to uphold the global arms control architecture, nuclear disarmament and non-proliferation on the basis of the NPT. Confronted with an openly aggressive Russia, the importance of nuclear deterrence has increased for many states, including for my country ...

Germany, as a NATO member, is fully committed to NATO's nuclear deterrence, the purpose of which is to preserve peace, deter aggression and prevent nuclear coercion.

As long as nuclear weapons exist, NATO will remain a nuclear Alliance. Germany will not accede to the TPNW, which would collide with our national security interests and our membership in NATO including nuclear deterrence.

Let me also clearly state that as non-member to the TPNW we are not bound by its provisions, nor do we accept the claim that its provisions are applicable under customary law – neither now nor in the future.

Germany's contribution to 2MSP, like the contributions of other NATO member states, appears to constitute a 'textbook' case of Persistent Objection. Such 'objection' is a deliberate attempt to prevent international laws such as the TPNW from achieving 'customary status'.