ican
international campaign
to abolish nuclear weapons

Non-Proliferation Treaty Review Conference 2010

TOWARDS NUCLEAR ABOLITION

A report by the International Campaign to Abolish Nuclear Weapons

June 2010

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About the International Campaign to Abolish Nuclear Weapons

The International Campaign to Abolish Nuclear Weapons (ICAN) is a global movement for the total elimination of nuclear weapons through a Nuclear Weapons Convention. Such a treaty would ban the production, testing, use and possession of nuclear weapons, and establish a timeframe for their elimination. UN Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon has endorsed a model convention prepared by non-government organizations.

ICAN was launched in 2007 as an initiative of International Physicians for the Prevention of Nuclear War, a global federation of health professionals. Today more than 200 organizations in 60 countries are part of ICAN, and thousands of individuals have signed our pledge for a nuclear-weapon-free world. We provide a voice to the overwhelming majority of people across the globe who support abolition.

In the coming years, ICAN hopes to generate a groundswell of public opposition to nuclear weapons, in all countries, and to inspire political leaders to negotiate a treaty abolishing these worst weapons of terror, before they are used again. Together we must work for one future, with zero nuclear weapons.

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OVERVIEW

The momentum builds for nuclear abolition

Tim Wright

UN Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon remarked to a crowd of one thousand disarmament campaigners on the eve of the 2010 Non-Proliferation Treaty Review Conference: "Nuclear disarmament is not a distant, unattainable goal; it is an urgent necessity. Here, now, we are determined to achieve it." In recent years, leaders of all political hues have expressed their hope and vision for a world free of nuclear weapons — including US president Barack Obama and Russian president Dmitry Medvedev. But is there a genuine commitment by the nuclear-armed states, and others, to make the goal of nuclear abolition a reality?

The NPT Review Conference, which was attended by representatives from almost every country in the world from May 3 to 28, presented the international community with an opportunity to formulate an ambitious action plan to banish nuclear weapons from global arsenals. But four of the five NPT nuclear-weapon states — the United States, Russia, France and the United Kingdom — vehemently rejected all attempts to attach timelines to disarmament obligations and, in the end, only managed to agree on a modest, largely aspirational, plan for implementing their four-decade-old undertaking to disarm.

On a more positive note, for the first time at an NPT review conference, an overwhelming majority of non-nuclear-weapon states expressed strong support for the negotiation of a Nuclear Weapons Convention — a global comprehensive legal framework to outlaw and eliminate nuclear weapons — in line with the chemical and biological weapons conventions. However, to the disappointment of civil society, the 189 parties to the NPT were ultimately unable to commit themselves to begin work on a Nuclear Weapons Convention now. Pursuing a convention would fundamentally alter the discriminatory status quo of nuclear "haves" and "have-nots" by establishing a universal ban on nuclear weapons for all. It would put in place the legal and institutional framework required to achieve nuclear elimination in a verifiable manner under effective international control.

Although the final text from the Review Conference did not call on states to negotiate a Nuclear Weapons Convention, it did refer to a convention twice in the context of the UN Secretary-General's five-point plan on nuclear disarmament announced in 2008. Even these weak non-endorsing references to a convention were highly controversial. The nuclear-weapon states, with the exception of China, resisted a convention on the basis that they are already doing enough to fulfil their legally binding obligation to disarm. But 40 years after the NPT entered into force, we must seriously question whether it is acceptable that there are still more than 23,000 nuclear arms in the world and none of the nuclear-armed states appears to be preparing for a future without them.

Global campaigning

The International Campaign to Abolish Nuclear Weapons (ICAN) was launched at the start of the last NPT review cycle in Vienna in 2007. Our goal has been to strengthen political support for the negotiation of a Nuclear Weapons Convention without further delay. We have a large network of active partner organizations in more than 60 countries, with dedicated campaigners educating the public about the urgent need to rid the world of nuclear weapons and holding dialogues with government officials, parliamentarians and mayors to plot the path to zero. In dozens of countries, we have applied pressure on decision makers through the media, street demonstrations, face-to-face meetings and letter-writing campaigns. Rapidly, the idea of a global ban on nuclear weapons is catching on around the world, with a wide variety of initiatives helping to bring it to prominence.

In Canada, more than 500 recipients of the highest national honour — the Order of Canada — have signed a declaration of support for a Nuclear Weapons Convention, the first such politically oriented activity by the esteemed group. In Japan, community organizers knocked on doors and stood on street corners to collect more than 10 million petition signatures with one simple demand: abolish nuclear weapons now through a Nuclear Weapons Convention.

Supporters of a convention

The Non-Aligned Movement, representing 116 parties to the NPT, strongly supported a convention at the Review Conference. The following nations also called for a convention in their statements:

Algeria	Libya
Austria	Liechtenstein
Brazil	Malaysia
Chile	Mexico
China	Mongolia
Colombia	Morocco
Costa Rica	Norway
Cuba	Philippines
Egypt	Qatar
Holy See	Senegal
Indonesia	Switzerland
Iran	Thailand
Kenya	Tunisia
Lebanon	Yemen

In New York, 15,000 demonstrators marched from Times Square to the United Nations the day before the Review Conference began, with the mayors of Hiroshima and Nagasaki leading. It was a massive show of global solidarity to bring about a prompt end to the nuclear age by negotiating a Nuclear Weapons Convention. There are countless other examples of groups mobilizing in different parts of the world with the aim of influencing the outcome of the NPT Review Conference and effecting a monumental shift from nuclear arms control to nuclear abolition.

Since it was launched, ICAN has produced a raft of materials for different audiences, from diplomats and politicians to lobbyists, grassroots activists and school students, with the aim of raising awareness about the need for a Nuclear Weapons Convention. We have sought to reach out to as many people as possible in order to create a genuine and irresistible movement for change. Our call for a convention has been heard on the radio airwaves and seen on the pages of some of the world's most widely read newspapers and journals. ICAN coordinated and funded the 2007 updating and publication of a Model Nuclear Weapons Convention, which Secretary-General Ban described in 2008 as "a good point of departure" for actual negotiations on a convention.

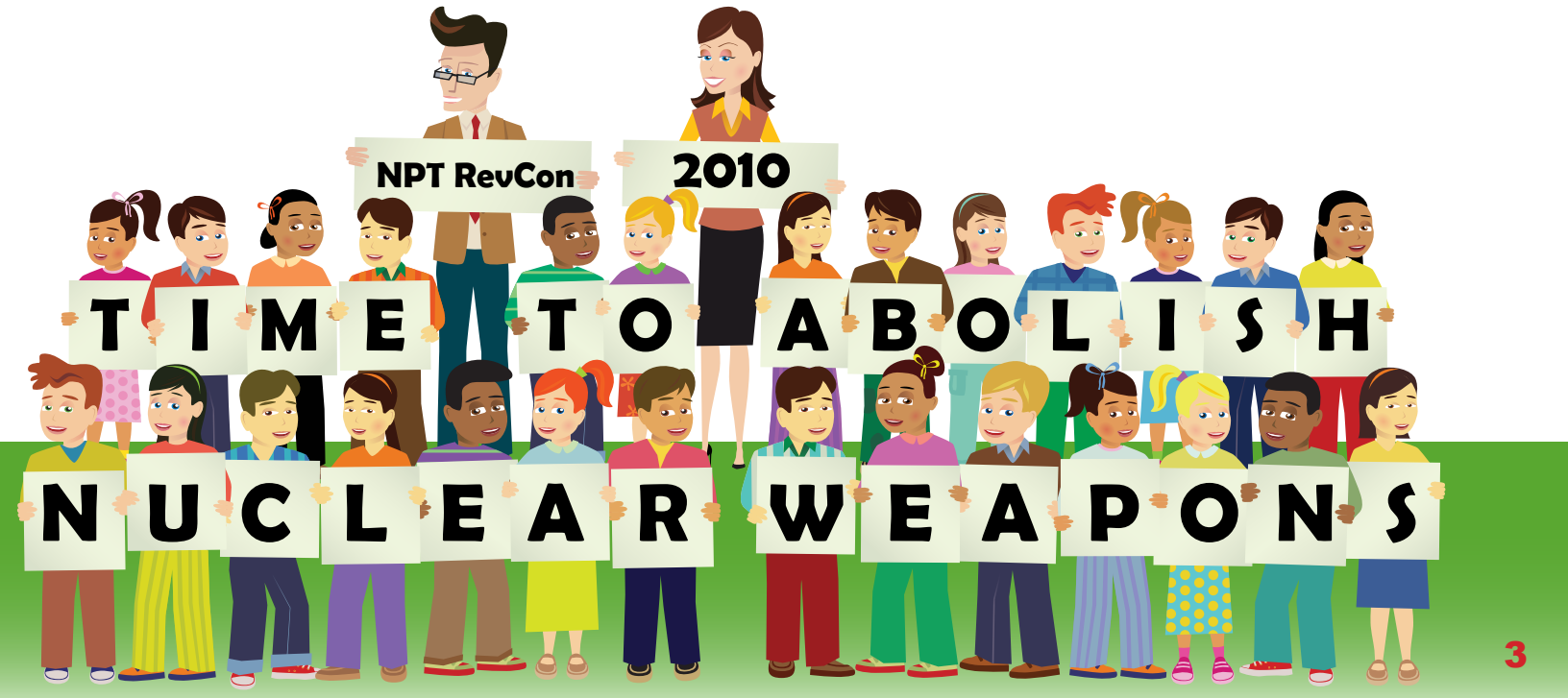
Campaigning at the UN

ICAN's strategy going into the NPT Review Conference was to increase substantially the number and diversity of countries advocating for a Nuclear Weapons Convention. We did this through dozens of national campaign initiatives and by engaging with diplomats at government missions to the United Nations in both New York and Geneva. In the three months leading up to the conference, we held a number of public events and informal discussions among national officials with the aim of putting a Nuclear Weapons Convention squarely on the NPT review conference agenda for the first time. We also had one-on-one meetings with roughly one-quarter of all NPT parties and kept all governments regularly updated on our work through mailouts. It was a comprehensive strategy that went well beyond trying to influence just the nuclear-weapon states. It is clear that, if we are to succeed in the campaign for a Nuclear Weapons Convention, we must generate a critical mass of support from across the world. In this regard, the UN Secretary-General's endorsement of a convention has been instrumental in strengthening global support for nuclear abolition.

During the Review Conference, ICAN held a number of well-attended events on the need for a convention. Our motto was "Nuclear Weapons Convention: Now We Can". ICAN supporter Jody Williams, who won the Nobel Peace Prize for her efforts to ban landmines in the 1990s, made an urgent plea to diplomats to commit to begin work on a convention now. She said that specious arguments against nuclear abolition — the same ones made against a mine ban treaty — can and must be challenged and overcome. She offered words of hope and encouragement to those who support the aim of abolition: "Governments can change their positions seemingly in a heartbeat, particularly in response to collective pressure by civil society."

Archbishop Desmond Tutu also added his voice to the campaign during the Review Conference by penning an opinion article for London's *Guardian* newspaper, in which he argued that we should not listen to the sceptics who tell us that nuclear abolition is an impossible dream. "Successful efforts to prohibit other classes of weapons provide evidence that, where there is political momentum and widespread popular support, obstacles which may at first appear insurmountable can very often be torn down," he wrote. "Nuclear abolition is the democratic wish of the world's people, and has been ever since the dawn of the atomic age."

During the conference, ICAN also published daily advertisements and articles in *News In Review*, an NGO



newsletter published by Reaching Critical Will, which is circulated to delegates. Our regular email updates were sent to representatives from every NPT party, as well as a large number of NGOs around the world.

The path forward

Despite the ability of the NPT parties to adopt a consensus document at the Review Conference, it is clear that large obstacles remain on the path to a nuclear-weapon-free world. The weak disarmament commitments in the final document demonstrate a real lack of will among the five NPT nuclear-weapon states to honour their longstanding obligation to disarm, even though their rhetoric may give the impression that they are advocates for disarmament. A further concern is that none of the four nuclear-armed states outside the NPT — Israel, India, Pakistan and North Korea — has shown any interest in dismantling its nuclear arsenal, and no meaningful attempts have been made to engage them in multilateral negotiations for nuclear disarmament. The challenges we face are enormous, but so are the possibilities.

The lack of progress in nuclear disarmament has forced many governments to accept that we must pursue an alternative path to a nuclear-weapon-free world. The step-by-step, incremental approach by itself has proven unsuccessful, not only in advancing nuclear disarmament, but also in halting nuclear proliferation. The current system of nuclear apartheid — where different standards apply to different states — cannot be sustained indefinitely. Unless we radically change our trajectory, the further proliferation and future use of nuclear weapons are all but inevitable.

The coming years may be the best opportunity we have to build pressure on all nuclear-armed and nuclear-allied states — as well as the dozens of states that ostensibly rely on nuclear weapons for their security — to take measurable steps for abolition. The failure of the NPT Review Conference to set out a clear roadmap to zero nuclear weapons must not be used as an excuse for inaction; it should be an impetus for urgent action.

Roughly two-thirds of governments are committed to beginning negotiations on a Nuclear Weapons Convention immediately, with the expectation that the last nuclear bomb will be dismantled by 2025. This may seem an unrealistic goal to some, but as Desmond Tutu reminded us during the Review Conference, "Systems and policies that devalue human life, and deprive us all of our right to live in peace with each other, are rarely able to withstand the pressure created by a highly organized public that is determined to see change." The question is: Are we committed to being the change we all wish to see in the world?

It would be foolish to expect the nuclear-weapon states to take the lead in pursuing a Nuclear Weapons Convention, as all of them seem intent on maintaining the status quo. Non-nuclear-weapon states, with the active encouragement of civil society, must begin the process now of establishing a global norm against the possession of nuclear weapons, with the aim of forcing the nuclear-armed states to end their addiction to the bomb.

Major partner organizations

- Acronym Institute for Disarmament Diplomacy
- Campaign for Nuclear Disarmament UK
- International Association of Lawyers Against Nuclear Arms
- International Association of Lawyers and Engineers Against Proliferation
- International Peace Bureau
- International Physicians for the Prevention of Nuclear War
- International Trade Union Confederation
- Mayors for Peace
- Nobel Women's Initiative
- Reaching Critical Will
- World Federation of United Nations Associations

In this report

This report provides a day-by-day analysis of the month-long NPT Review Conference, with a focus on the growing support for a Nuclear Weapons Convention, and efforts aimed at delegitimizing nuclear weapons and bringing humanitarianism into the disarmament debate. It also includes a collection of articles and speeches by ICAN supporters during the conference, and a list of government references to a Nuclear Weapons Convention. We hope you find it a useful resource.

Tim Wright is Nuclear Weapons Convention project coordinator for the International Campaign to Abolish Nuclear Weapons.

Calls for a Nuclear Weapons Convention before the NPT Review Conference

- **Australia:** ICAN held workshops with NGOs to raise awareness about the need for a Nuclear Weapons Convention.
- **Canada:** More than 500 members of the Order of Canada signed a declaration for a Nuclear Weapons Convention.
- **Costa Rica:** The entire Costa Rican parliament voted to endorse a declaration in support of a Nuclear Weapons Convention.
- **Finland:** Doctors in Finland met with foreign ministry officials to discuss the country's position on a Nuclear Weapons Convention.
- **Greece:** Greek doctors published opinion articles in newspapers calling on the government to get behind a convention.
- **Italy:** The Italian group Archivio Disarmo lobbied the government to support a Nuclear Weapons Convention.
- **Japan:** Japanese groups collected more than 10 million petition signatures calling for a Nuclear Weapons Convention.
- **Kenya:** Kenyan groups formed a partnership to promote the abolition of nuclear weapons through a Nuclear Weapons Convention.
- **Malaysia:** Doctors in Malaysia took part in a roundtable meeting with government officials to advance the idea of a convention.
- **Mauritius:** Young peace activists in Mauritius organized a rally to encourage the government to join the push for a convention.
- **New Zealand:** New Zealand disarmament campaigners called on their government to take the lead on a convention, and not drop the ball.
- **Norway:** Norwegian campaigners formed an NGO coalition to encourage their government to back the call for a convention.
- **Pakistan:** Pakistani citizens wrote to their UN ambassador calling on the government to support a Nuclear Weapons Convention.
- **The Philippines:** Medical students in the Philippines organized a festival and fashion show to promote a nuclear abolition treaty.
- **South Korea:** Experts from the Middle Powers Initiative met in Seoul to call for a Nuclear Weapons Convention.
- **Sri Lanka:** Sri Lankan doctors held a vigil and discussion forum relating to the need for a Nuclear Weapons Convention.
- **Sweden:** Swedish NGOs lobbied their own government and visited embassies in Stockholm to raise the call for a convention.
- **Switzerland:** Swiss campaigners held a workshop on the need for a Nuclear Weapons Convention at a conference of health professionals.
- **Syria:** Campaigners in Syria circulated a convention briefing paper in Arabic to peace organizations and governments in the region.
- **United Kingdom:** British anti-nuclear groups organized a series of protests to oppose Trident submarine renewal and call for a convention.
- **United States:** Groups called on President Obama to support a convention as a way of realizing a nuclear-weapon-free world.

IPPNW students Katharina Bergmann (left) and Misha Byrne (right) at a street action during the Review Conference.

No more Hiroshimas, no more Nagasakis

Sunday, May 2

The 2010 NPT Review Conference began on May 3 with the foreign ministers of 19 states, as well as the president of Iran and deputy prime minister of Luxembourg, delivering opening statements in the General Assembly Hall. At the conference, many civil society groups adopted the slogan "Nuclear Weapons Convention: Now We Can" in an attempt to focus debate on the task of abolishing nuclear weapons, not just preventing their spread.

Although nuclear issues have gained new prominence on the international agenda over the last year or two, there has been relatively little discussion on the steps needed to achieve disarmament. We made it clear to governments at the beginning of the Review Conference that a mere re-affirmation of the unequivocal undertaking by the nuclear-weapon states to disarm would be unlikely, in and of itself, to lead to the deep and irreversible cuts in global arsenals we need if global zero is to be reached in the foreseeable future. We called for bold new thinking.

In the lead-up to the Review Conference, UN Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon had repeatedly called on NPT parties to fulfil their obligation to disarm by pursuing negotiations on a Nuclear Weapons Convention, backed by a strong system of verification, or a framework of separate but mutually reinforcing agreements for the complete elimination of nuclear weapons. Speaking at the Riverside Church in New York the Saturday before the conference, he said, "Nuclear disarmament is not a distant, unattainable goal; it is an urgent necessity. Here, now, we are determined to achieve it." He commended civil society for the enthusiasm with which it has embraced his five-point plan on disarmament, particularly the call for a convention.

The Non-Aligned Movement, which makes up a large majority of the parties to the NPT, has long supported the idea of a convention to some extent. The Thursday before the Review Conference began, it released an action plan on nuclear disarmament calling for an international conference at the earliest possible stage to negotiate an agreement for the phased elimination of nuclear weapons within a specified time frame. It envisages that the treaty would enter into force some time between 2015 and 2020, and that elimination would be achieved between 2020 and 2025. These targets are ambitious, but they are also realistic.

The International Commission on Nuclear Non-Proliferation and Disarmament (ICNND), a joint initiative of the Japanese and Australian governments, released its major report, *Eliminating Nuclear Threats*, last year. It argued: "There is no reason why detailed further work on such a convention should not commence now, and with government support." These two governments should join others like Austria, the Philippines, Switzerland, Malaysia and Costa Rica in leading the push for a convention.

There is no doubt that civil society is committed to the idea of a global ban. The day before the NPT Review Conference began, 15,000 demonstrators — young and old, from dozens of countries — marched from Times Square to the UN to voice their support. The mayors of Hiroshima and Nagasaki led the march with the call, "No more Hiroshimas. No more Nagasakis. Abolish nuclear weapons now." The protesters made up only a small sample of the many millions around the world who are part of the growing call for an abolition treaty.

What will it take for government decision-makers to listen and act? ■

How long must we wait for nuclear abolition?

Monday, May 3

Amb. Libran Cabactulan of the Philippines opened the NPT Review Conference on Monday, May 3, with a call for states parties to redouble their efforts for a world free of nuclear weapons. "The world expects a positive outcome, and we must deliver. This is our duty, as diplomats, to our leaders and to our people." The day before, he had received signatures from 20 million people, more than half of them Japanese citizens, demanding urgent action on a global ban on nuclear weapons.

UN Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon, who has adopted nuclear disarmament as one of his central objectives, made similar remarks to assembled foreign ministers and diplomats. "Hopes and expectations are high. The world's people look to you for action." He challenged the NPT states parties to "take steps that will set the stage for a breakthrough", and reminded them of his five-point plan, which includes consideration of a Nuclear Weapons Convention.

The first government speaker of the day was Dr. Marty Natalegawa, the foreign minister of Indonesia, who delivered a statement on behalf of the Non-Aligned Movement, expressing support for a convention and an unwillingness to accept an outcome document that failed to advance disarmament: "The consideration of a Nuclear Weapons Convention banning all nuclear weapons, as mentioned in Article VI of the [NPT], should begin and should be an integral part of any plan of action on nuclear disarmament to be adopted by this Conference." Dr. Natalegawa also noted his own country's endorsement of the growing call to begin work on a convention: "We must work intensively together to produce a universal Nuclear Weapons Convention with a specific timeline for the attainment of complete nuclear disarmament. For the eradication of nuclear weapons is our only assurance that they will never be used."

Austria reiterated its firm commitment to a convention, which was first announced at last year's historic session of the UN Security Council on nuclear issues. Foreign minister Michael Spindelegger argued that "the most effective way to move towards global zero is through a universal legal instrument, a Nuclear Weapons Convention, equipped with a strict multilateral verification system ... The Austrian government and the legislature — which recently adopted a formal resolution on a world without nuclear weapons — will closely examine how disarmament is dealt with at this Conference. If there is no clear progress towards global zero, we will discuss with partners the feasibility of a global instrument to ban these weapons."

He acknowledged that the NPT remains the cornerstone of the nuclear non-proliferation regime, but emphasized that "a static regime that has lost its vision may benefit from fresh ideas". He also recalled that Austria had played an active role in bringing about and successfully concluding negotiations on the Mine Ban Treaty and, more recently, the Convention on Cluster Munitions, indicating that a similar process might be effective for nuclear weapons.

For the first time, the government of Switzerland also expressed clear support for a Nuclear Weapons Convention. It is one of the few nations outside the Non-Aligned Movement that have resolved it is time for a convention. Foreign minister Micheline Calmy-Rey stressed the humanitarian risks of nuclear weapons and stated: "[W]e must outlaw nuclear weapons, specifically by means of a Nuclear Weapons Convention, as proposed by the UN Secretary-General."

The need for a Nuclear Weapons Convention was also discussed at a briefing session held by the co-chairs of the International Commission on Nuclear Non-Proliferation and Disarmament. Gareth Evans, from Australia, said that he has encountered "quite a degree of sympathy" among consulted nations and NGOs for beginning work on a convention. He argued that governments should agree at this Review Conference to begin preparatory work on the comprehensive abolition treaty, "not in five or 10 years' time, but now". He also called on governments to support the establishment of a global centre for nuclear disarmament and non-proliferation whose objectives would include laying the foundations for a Nuclear Weapons Convention. Yoriko Kawaguchi of Japan, the other co-chair of ICNND, expressed her disappointment that the Japanese and Australian governments had not gone further on disarmament in their action plan submitted to the Review Conference. Both governments have so far resisted calls from their civil societies to endorse the UN Secretary-General's push for a convention.

The first day of the Review Conference ended with a poignant reminder of why we are working for the abolition of nuclear weapons. The NGO Hibakusha Stories hosted a moving event in the UN lobby with the many survivors of the atomic bombings who made the journey to New York for the conference. Their message is simple and powerful: no one should ever again suffer as they have. No doubt, these *hibakusha* have asked themselves on many occasions the same question that Ban Ki-moon posed to delegates in his statement to the conference: "How long must we wait to rid ourselves of this threat? How long will we keep passing the problem to succeeding generations?" ■

UN Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon speaks at the Riverside Church on May 2.

Defining success: beyond nuclear arms control

Tuesday, May 4

In the first two days of the Review Conference, we heard the foreign ministers from numerous countries repeat the call for a "successful" outcome. But what defines success? The Norwegian deputy foreign minister, Gry Larsen, said: "Our ambitions should be far higher than merely agreeing on a final document. We need an outcome document that makes a real difference."

The Non-Aligned Movement made it clear at the beginning of the conference that movement towards a Nuclear Weapons Convention would be "integral" to any agreed plan of action. Some European countries also expressed support for an abolition-focused outcome. China remains the only NPT nuclear-weapon state to have expressed its support for such an approach, although the United Kingdom has previously accepted that a convention will likely be necessary at some point in the future.

The Chinese head of delegation, Li Baodong, argued in the general debate that "[t]he international community should develop, at an appropriate time, a viable, long-term plan composed of phased actions, including a convention on the complete prohibition of nuclear weapons".

The final government speaker on the second day of the conference was Nasser Bin Abdulaziz Al-Nasser of Qatar, who stressed that the Review Conference should adopt an action plan to eliminate nuclear weapons, and concluded on this optimistic note: "We hope that we will not wait long before we celebrate a universal treaty for disarmament and prohibition of nuclear weapons, for this has legal and political importance."

Campaigners and diplomats met at lunchtime to examine ways to advance the idea of a Nuclear Weapons Convention at the Review Conference.

The model convention developed by civil society was presented as a useful tool with which to stimulate debate. Ban Ki-moon described it in 2008 as a "good point of departure" for actual negotiations. ■

Left to right: Tetsuro Fukuyama, Japanese state secretary for foreign affairs; Yoriko Kawaguchi and Gareth Evans, co-chairs of the International Commission on Nuclear Non-Proliferation and Disarmament; Stephen Smith, Australian foreign minister.

The medical and environmental effects of nuclear war

Wednesday, May 5

On the third day of the Review Conference, more than a dozen states or groups of states mentioned the need for a Nuclear Weapons Convention in their statements during general debate. This vocal display of government support for a global ban on nuclear weapons is unprecedented at an NPT Review Conference, and it provided great encouragement to the many civil society groups intent on shifting the focus of debate from the failed policy of arms control to a roadmap for abolition.

The president of the Review Conference, Amb. Libran Cabactulan of the Philippines, whose government has become a major supporter of a convention, spoke off the cuff to a crowd of diplomats and campaigners at a Middle Powers Initiative (MPI) function in the evening near the UN. He reiterated his determination to ensure that the proposal for a convention would be properly discussed at the Review Conference.

Douglas Roche, a former Canadian Senator and former MPI chair, handed Amb. Cabactulan the signatures of more than 500 members of the Order of Canada — the nation's highest public honour — making an urgent plea for work to begin now on a nuclear abolition treaty. Parliamentarians from various national legislatures presented Amb. Cabactulan with their own global petition for a convention.

Egypt was among the many governments to come out strongly in favour of a convention early at the conference, which was important given its position as chair of both the Non-Aligned Movement and New Agenda Coalition, as well as a member of the Arab and Africa groups. The head of the Egyptian delegation said: "[C]ertain challenges must be decisively confronted through the outcome to emerge from the Conference … [including] the need to create a legal framework to eliminate nuclear weapons through the conclusion of an international legally binding convention to eliminate nuclear weapons in a specified timeframe."

> With the new emphasis on a convention, it may be possible to begin work on such a treaty sooner than sceptics would have us think.

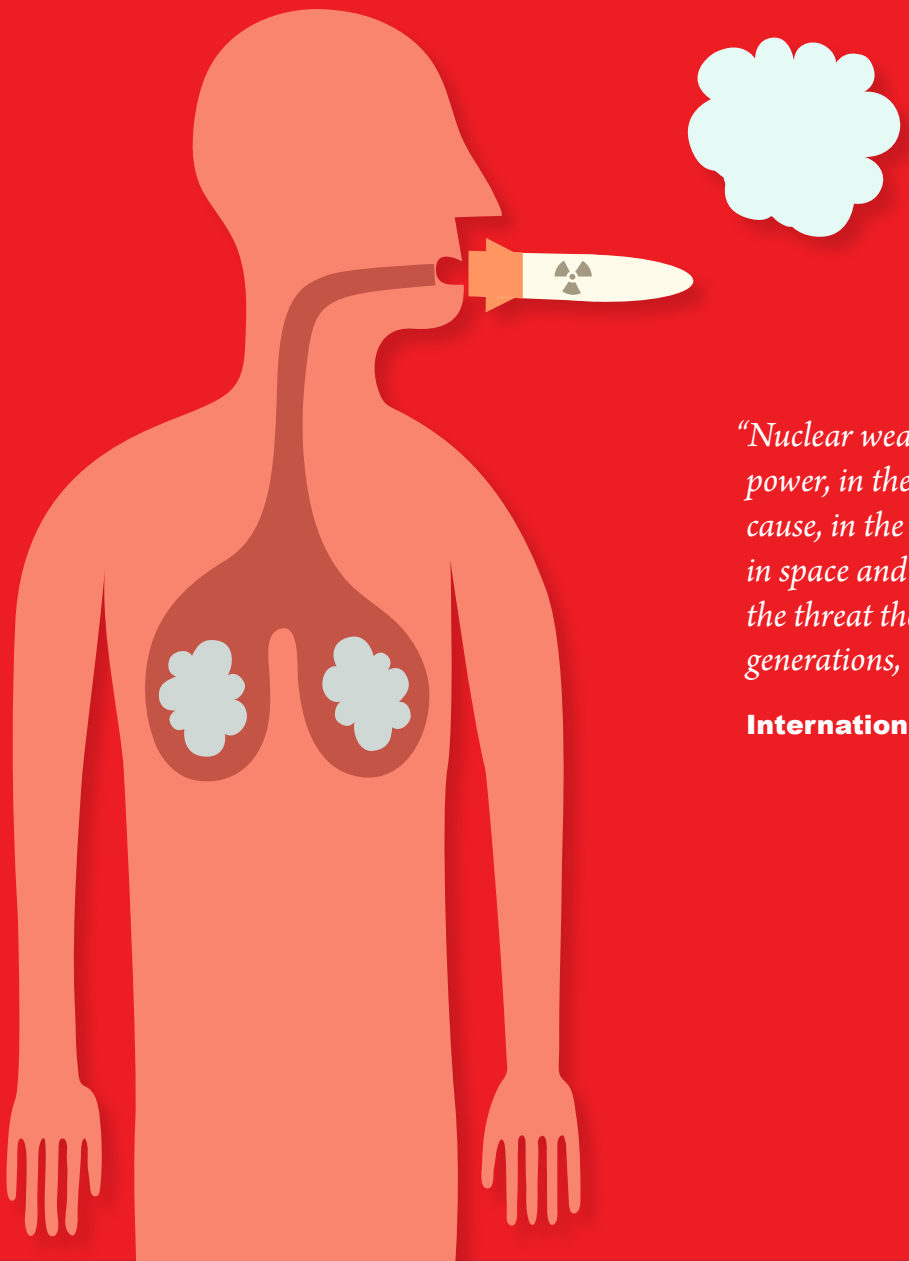
Among the other supporters of a convention on day three of the conference were Lichtenstein, Costa Rica, Malaysia, Mongolia, Tunisia, Kenya, El Salvador, Lebanon, Cuba and Colombia. Lichtenstein also welcomed Switzerland's determination to work to delegitimize nuclear weapons by focusing discussions on the humanitarian risks of these weapons. A lunchtime seminar organized by the International Physicians for the Prevention of Nuclear War was a helpful reminder of the "human reality" of nuclear weapons.

On April 20 this year, for the first time, the president of the International Committee of the Red Cross delivered a statement solely addressing the nuclear problem. His prognosis for preventing the use of nuclear weapons was simple: states must fulfil their existing obligations under international law to prohibit and completely eliminate such weapons through a legally binding international treaty. He also said: "[T]he debate about nuclear weapons must be conducted not only on the basis of military doctrines and power politics … The currency of this debate must ultimately be about human beings, about the fundamental rules of international humanitarian law, and about the collective future of humanity." He warned that there would be no effective international medical response to the use of a nuclear weapon.

Concern for the medical and environmental effects of nuclear weapons was expressed in many government statements at the Review Conference. And with the new emphasis on a convention, it may be possible to begin work on such a treaty sooner than many of the sceptics would have us think. ■

Quitnukes.

Advice from your doctor?
Support a Nuclear Weapons Convention. Help the world overcome its addiction.



"Nuclear weapons are unique in their destructive power, in the unspeakable human suffering they cause, in the impossibility of controlling their effects in space and time, in the risks of escalation and in the threat they pose to the environment, to future generations, indeed, to the survival of humanity."

International Committee of the Red Cross, 2009

Setting benchmarks for banning the bomb

Thursday, May 6

Amb. Claude Heller of Mexico asked delegates at the NPT Review Conference on the fourth day: If we have a timetable for mitigating climate change and promoting human development, why not for eliminating nuclear weapons? He then called on the nuclear-weapon states to agree to "negotiate a convention that prohibits these weapons with a timeframe that provides certainty to the international community".

A number of other Latin American countries also joined the call for a comprehensive nuclear abolition treaty. The Chilean ambassador, for example, stated his nation's support for the UN Secretary-General's five-point plan on nuclear disarmament, and encouraged governments to lay the foundations at the Review Conference for discussion on a convention prohibiting nuclear weapons.

The Holy See — which is a state party to the treaty, but not a UN member — also backed the idea, declaring that "the world has arrived at an opportune moment to begin addressing in a systematic way the legal, political and technical requisites for a nuclear weapons free world ... for this reason, preparatory work should begin as soon as possible on a convention or framework agreement leading to the phased elimination of nuclear weapons".

For many years, parliamentarians have been active in building acceptance of the need for a convention abolishing nuclear weapons.

The Inter-Parliamentary Union, which has observer status at the UN, argued in its statement: "Current barriers to nuclear disarmament could be overcome through commencing a preparatory process which would explore the legal, technical, institutional and political requirements for a nuclear-weapon-free world. This process could be guided, but would not be bound by, the Model Nuclear Weapons Convention circulated by the UN Secretary-General." ■

In 2010 the nuclear bomb turns 65. It's time for compulsory retirement.

"Our generation was born after the Cold War. We had nothing to do with the creation and proliferation of nuclear weapons. We are growing up in a globalized world, where modern communication and technology connect so many of us. Today young people have friends all around the world. People in other countries are no longer distant and strange enemies to us. We speak to them every day. Therefore we are able to build trust. Weapons are not protecting us from potential enemies — they are creating them."

Youth Statement, NPT Review Conference

Outlawing the most destructive weapons of all

Friday, May 7

If there was a single message to come out of the NPT Review Conference at the end of the first week, it was this: There are treaties outlawing anti-personnel landmines, cluster munitions, biological weapons and chemical weapons. Why should it not be possible to negotiate a treaty banning nuclear weapons, the most destructive weapons of all?

In Main Committee I, Brazil joined the growing call for a Nuclear Weapons Convention, arguing that a successful Review Conference outcome was predicated on the definition of clear objectives on a number of points, including a commitment to the goal of concluding a Nuclear Weapons Convention "outlawing this category of weapons entirely, with a well-defined timeframe, in line with the Chemical and Biological Weapons Conventions".

On Friday, non-government organizations also had an opportunity to take part formally in proceedings at the Review Conference. The urgent need for a convention was the overarching theme of the presentations. The keynote speaker, Jody Williams — an ICAN supporter who shared the 1997 Nobel Peace Prize for her involvement in the successful campaign for a mine ban treaty — said this to diplomats:

"It is time for all governments to come together — with the support of civil society around the world — to chart our course to a nuclear-free future by beginning the negotiation of a comprehensive treaty banning the use, production, transfer and stockpiling of nuclear weapons. Now. Not in years or decades. Now."

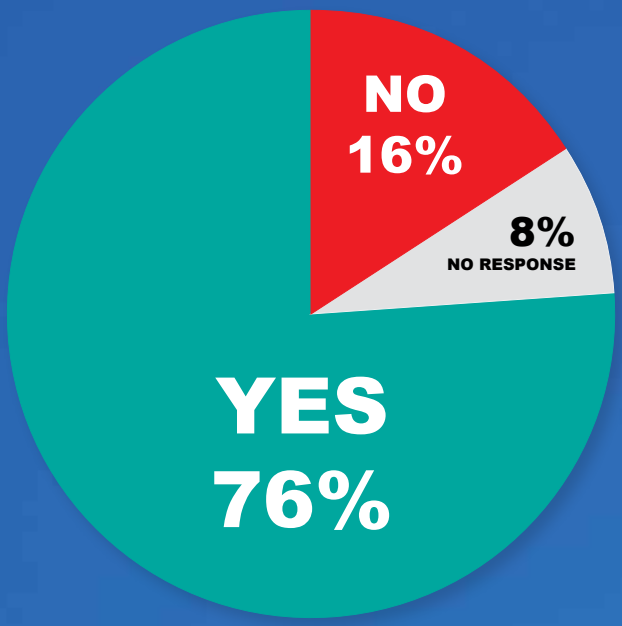
Dr. Rebecca Johnson, a vice-chair of ICAN, also urged states parties to begin the process for a convention. "Our route, timing and even humanity's survival will depend on whether we can commit ourselves to this journey now," she said. "This NPT Review Conference needs to agree on the treaty destination and set in motion the preparatory process and plans to get there as quickly as humanly possible."

Dozens of peace and anti-nuclear groups belonging to the Abolition 2000 network — whose goal is to ensure genuine human security for all peoples — met at the weekend after the first week to develop an action plan towards a peaceful, nuclear-free world. The groups adopted a declaration, which stated: "Building on the groundswell of international public opinion, we call on all governments to begin negotiations on a Nuclear Weapons Convention to ban all nuclear weapons by 2020."

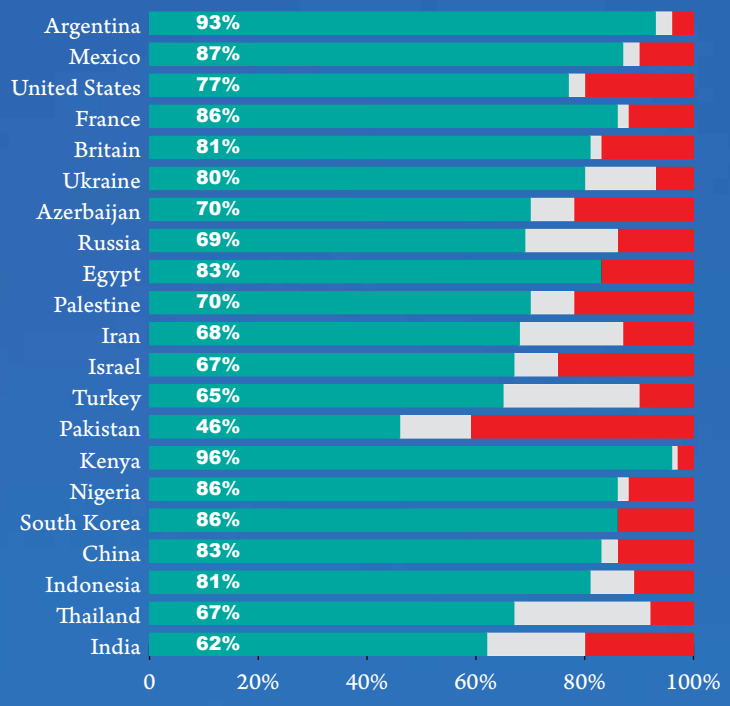
Public opinion is already solidly on our side. Opinion polls conducted in 21 countries in 2008 revealed that, on average, 76% of people would be happy for their government to sign on to a Nuclear Weapons Convention, with just 16% opposed to the idea. An absolute majority of respondents in all of the nuclear-armed states expressed support for a convention, except in Pakistan, which had a non-absolute majority (46%) in favour. In the United States, 77% endorsed the idea; in Russia, 69%; in the United Kingdom, 81%; in France, 86%; and in China, 83%. Clearly there is a popular mandate to act. So what are governments waiting for? ■

The people say ‘yes’ to a Nuclear Weapons Convention.

Opinion polls conducted in 21 countries have revealed that, on average, 76% of people worldwide support the negotiation of a treaty banning and eliminating all nuclear weapons. Large majorities in all five of the NPT nuclear-weapon states said “yes” to a Nuclear Weapons Convention. Nuclear abolition is the democratic wish of the world’s people. Governments have a clear popular mandate to start work on a binding, verifiable convention. A Nuclear Weapons Convention — Now We Can.



Average support globally



Source: Global Zero

SPEECH

Why we can, and must, abolish nuclear weapons now

Jody Williams

In October of 1986, Ronald Reagan and Mikhail Gorbachev met in Reykjavik, Iceland, where they seriously discussed the elimination of nuclear weapons. It was a moment of mind-boggling possibility. It was a moment of promise that could have changed our world forever. It was a moment for bold leadership. And it was a moment lost. But I, like many, many others, believe that we are at a critical and promising moment again — perhaps we could call it a new "Reykjavik moment". Or the "Promise of Prague".

But in either case, this is a moment of immense possibility that can and must succeed. Since those Reagan–Gorbachev talks so many years ago, the world has been charting a dangerous nuclear course. We have witnessed nuclear proliferation and the threat of more. We are now confronted with a real possibility of nuclear materials falling into the hands of armed non-state actors who would not hesitate to use them.

These new realities have been a wake-up call to the world and over the past couple of years, there has been increased fervor over renewed possibilities of nuclear disarmament. In April of last year, we heard the Prague promise of a future free of nuclear weapons. This was followed by an unprecedented meeting last September, chaired by a US president at the United Nations, to discuss nuclear weapons. Since then we have witnessed the successful conclusion of negotiations of a new START agreement between the United States and Russia, and the signing of that treaty — again in Prague — this April. And less than a week after that, 47 heads of state met in Washington, DC, for a nuclear summit in the lead-up to this very important Review Conference of the Non-Proliferation Treaty now under way here in New York. We welcome and embrace the increased attention to and talk about nuclear weapons and a world free of these unconscionable weapons of mass destruction. After all, opinion polls conducted in 21 countries in 2008 found that an estimated 76% of people around the world — including majorities in the nuclear states — support the idea of a binding, verifiable Nuclear Weapons Convention.

> "Now, with new possibilities again palpable, we cannot and we must not let this moment pass."

If this does not demonstrate to governments that they have a clear popular mandate to begin serious negotiations now, what will it take? If the nuclear states ignore the will of the overwhelming majority of people around the world, I worry what that means for our collective future. Since Hiroshima and Nagasaki, the people of this planet have been in thrall to those few nations who all too literally hold our very existence in their nuclear hands.

There have been moments of great hope — Reykjavik — and moments of horrific fear — the Cuban Missile Crisis. After the NPT Review Conference of 2005, the nuclear future looked dismal. Now, with new possibilities again palpable, we cannot and we must not let this moment pass. The states gathered here in New York can seize this opportunity and change our future forever. With brave vision and even bolder action, the promise of Prague can be transformed into the reality of nuclear abolition. This will not happen with rousing rhetoric or nuclear legerdemain. This will happen with a clear and honest assessment of the progress made and the challenges remaining in the implementation of the Non-Proliferation Treaty. Now, some 40 years after its entry into force, are states — and the peoples of the world that they represent — satisfied that the NPT is being properly implemented and complied with? Is proliferation truly being held in check? Are the nuclear states honestly and actively working towards the elimination of their own weapons as mandated by the treaty? If the weapons potential of nuclear power is not clearly tackled can we ever really be free of the nuclear threat?

In 1997, with successful negotiation of the Mine Ban Treaty and then again in 2008 with the Cluster Munition Convention, the world recognized that total elimination was the only way to ensure non-use and non-proliferation of those conventional weapons that by their very nature undeniably posed too grave a danger to civilians. Even earlier, with the Chemical Weapons Convention, states recognized that total elimination was the only viable approach for a weapon of mass destruction. Nuclear weapons are not — nor can they be allowed to be — the exception. Civil society and non-governmental organizations suffer no illusion that the journey to nuclear abolition will be easy, but we do know that it must begin now.

Those few who hold our collective fate in their hands must respond to the collective will of the billions they allege to protect with nuclear weapons we do not want. It is time for all governments to come together — with the support of civil society around the world — to chart our course to a nuclear-free future by beginning the negotiation of a comprehensive treaty banning the use,

production, transfer and stockpiling of nuclear weapons. Now. Not in years or decades. Now. Whenever there has been an effort to eliminate a weapon, there have been many who resisted the change. In some cases, some argued for "better regulations" to clarify the "responsible use" of a particular weapon. In others, it was argued that such negotiations were "premature" — as some insist now in relation to a nuclear weapons convention.

The arguments against banning anti-personnel landmines, cluster bombs and chemical weapons were specious. It is specious now to maintain that it is premature to negotiate the elimination of nuclear weapons — creations of such heinous violence that they almost defy the imagination. Specious arguments can and must be challenged and overcome.

Governments can change their positions seemingly in a heartbeat. Particularly in response to collective pressure by civil society. Such change has happened before and it can happen now. It is a matter of recognizing the humanitarian costs and then generating sufficient political will.

Calling for the appropriate treaty is the normal and obvious way to proceed in order to generate the necessary political will and momentum to achieve a weapons ban. After all, that is why we have a Nuclear Test Ban Treaty, a Cluster Munition Convention, a Mine Ban Treaty and a Chemical Weapons Convention.

We could start now to push to eliminate nuclear weapons by outlawing their use altogether. The International Court of Justice could declare their use to be a crime against humanity. Let's not forget that the use of chemical weapons was banned before the comprehensive treaty was finally negotiated many years later. In other words, it has been done before with other weapons of mass destruction. It can be done again with nuclear weapons.

Even if begun today, the difficult and complex negotiations for a total ban of nuclear weapons would take time. Even if a Nuclear Weapons Convention were successfully negotiated in a relatively short period, the process of eliminating all the nuclear weapons in the world today would take time. And the world does not have the luxury of too much more time.

"Whenever there has been an effort to eliminate a weapon, there have been many who resisted change. It is specious to maintain that it is premature to negotiate the elimination of nuclear weapons."

Charting this new course could be undertaken by like-minded states or by the UN General Assembly — or it could be launched here and now out of this NPT Review Conference. States could begin the process of negotiating a Nuclear Weapons Convention now. After all, it certainly is not a new idea. Nor is it the simply the "noise" generated by civil society and non-governmental organizations.

United Nations Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon included a call for a Nuclear Weapons Convention in the first point of his five-point plan on nuclear disarmament, in which he urged all states to fulfil their longstanding obligation to disarm. Each year, more than 120 states in the UN General Assembly vote in favour of a resolution on the illegality of nuclear weapons which calls for the immediate commencement of negotiations leading to the early conclusion of a Nuclear Weapons Convention.

The beginning of a process to ban nuclear weapons does not mean that other measures would be neglected. Over the lengthy period of negotiation of the Chemical Weapons Convention, for example, the United States and Russia also bilaterally negotiated concerning their large stockpiles. Preparation for, and negotiation of, a Nuclear Weapons Convention can proceed in parallel with, and inform and stimulate, negotiation and implementation of other measures.

In closing, I must strongly underscore again that the seemingly impossible can happen. But it will take a global partnership. It will take the determination and commitment of governments, UN agencies and civil society alike. But it can be done. It must be done. The experiences of the earlier ban conventions are instructive. The International Campaign to Ban Landmines was successful beyond our wildest expectations. In fact, among my very first trips to promote the campaign, I came here to New York to try to talk with governments about banning anti-personnel landmines. In those days, I was lucky if anyone at an embassy would even answer my calls. It seemed a cold and unforgiving world.

But we took an issue that at the time was called a "utopian dream" and with commitment and determination and true grit created enough political pressure around the world to get governments to begin to take unilateral steps to deal with the landmine problem. Those individual state actions provided the necessary momentum to build sufficient political will so that governments that believed in the ban and civil society organizations became strong partners in the process that gave the world the Mine Ban Treaty. A very similar process resulted in the Convention on Cluster Munitions.

That work has been called "micro-disarmament" by some, and not always as a compliment. There is absolutely no question that abolishing nuclear weapons is a far more daunting enterprise. Yet a nuclear-free world is not an impossible goal. It is not the utopian dream of those who do not understand the harsh realities of the world. In fact, we understand those realities all too well — which is why we want a Nuclear Weapons Convention.

We listen to the survivors of Hiroshima and Nagasaki and can picture a horror that no human being should ever have to suffer again. We think about continued nuclear proliferation and the fear and instability that such proliferation foretells. The all-too-real possibility of armed non-state actors getting their hands on nuclear weapons and using them is nothing but terrifying. But "nuclear deterrence" surely does not underpin their strategies.

These scenarios are not the wild thinking of fuzzy-headed peaceniks contemplating futures full of beautiful rainbows and peace doves all the while trying to conjure them up while singing *Kumbaya*. They are the stark and clear-headed understanding of the nuclear state of play in the world today. They are extremely harsh realities that we are determined to overcome with the total elimination of the use, production, trade and stockpiling of nuclear weapons. Civil society will work in open partnership — as we did in the landmine and cluster munition ban movements — with states that show real and daring leadership by launching a process now to begin the difficult work of negotiating a Nuclear Weapons Convention.

The Reykjavik moment was lost — at our peril. We cannot squander the promise of the past few years. We must not squander the promise of Prague. We do not have the luxury of time. The world cannot wait for change. It must come now. And each and every one of us has a part to play in transforming the possibility of a nuclear-free world into reality now. Not eventually, but now. ■

Jody Williams is a patron of ICAN, and a co-laureate of the 1997 Nobel Peace Prize. This speech was delivered on Friday, May 7, as part of the official NGO presentations to the NPT Review Conference.

Left to right: Tim Wright, ICAN; Sen. Douglas Roche, Middle Powers Initiative; Jody Williams, Nobel Women's Initiative.

Nuclear Weapons Convention

NOW WE CAN

Governments have negotiated treaties outlawing biological weapons, chemical weapons, anti-personnel landmines and cluster munitions. Now it's time to begin work on a Nuclear Weapons Convention (NWC). This is our best hope of realizing the Non-Proliferation Treaty's core promise: a nuclear-weapon-free world.

Image Credit: Frank Micelotta/Getty Images

"Some governments tell us that a Nuclear Weapons Convention is premature and unlikely. Don't believe them. They told us the same thing about a mine ban treaty."

Jody Williams
Nobel Peace Prize Laureate

WEEK TWO

Delegitimizing the possession of nuclear weapons

Monday, May 10

More than four decades have passed since the Non-Proliferation Treaty entered into force. Yet today many governments continue to regard nuclear weapons as legitimate instruments of national security. The few "privileged" states that possess nuclear weapons still attach great prestige to them.

If we are to succeed in the campaign to abolish nuclear weapons through a binding convention, we must effectively break down the perception of these weapons as the ultimate expression of state power. They are, in reality, instruments of terror. The process of negotiating a convention would itself have a delegitimizing effect.

At the beginning of the second week of the Review Conference, the Swiss government, along with the Center for Nonproliferation Studies and the Monterey Institute, launched the results of a study aimed at debunking the theory of deterrence and delegitimizing nuclear weapons. The five authors have expertise in international law, nuclear physics, philosophy, global politics and history.

They suggest that a like-minded representative group of states, including nuclear-armed states and committed non-nuclear states, should stimulate the negotiation of a global convention prohibiting nuclear weapons and providing for their elimination. This approach, they note, is also the most likely to gain widespread public support.

> "Today many governments continue to regard nuclear weapons as legitimate instruments of national security. The few 'privileged' states that possess nuclear weapons still attach great prestige to them."

As discussions were taking place between diplomats in New York on advancing nuclear disarmament and non-proliferation, parliamentarians were also debating these issues back home. For example, the New Zealand parliament in the first week of May passed a unanimous resolution endorsing the UN Secretary-General's five-point proposal on disarmament, which includes consideration of a Nuclear Weapons Convention. In March, German legislators called on their government to play an active role in the debate on a Nuclear Weapons Convention, and the Bangladeshi parliament passed a similar resolution in April. Many of the 700 members of Parliamentarians for Nuclear Nonproliferation and Disarmament have signed a declaration supporting a convention. ■

WEEK TWO

Negotiations on a Nuclear Weapons Convention

Tuesday, May 11

Negotiations began during the second week of the Review Conference on a Nuclear Weapons Convention — but not among governments, unfortunately. Thirty university students from Hamburg, Germany, took part in a simulation exercise organized by the International Network of Engineers and Scientists Against Proliferation. The students found it to be a valuable learning experience, but it may also have taught some disillusioned diplomats lessons on how it can be done.

Norway pointed out on Tuesday of the second week that the current rate of progress towards a nuclear-weapon-free world is just not good enough. "After 65 years with nuclear weapons and 40 years with the NPT, we cannot claim that we are where we should be with nuclear disarmament … We must establish a new international nuclear agenda with an action plan for nuclear disarmament with clear benchmarks and deadlines holding us all accountable."

Norway argued that, if governments are to succeed in implementing Article VI of the NPT and achieve the complete elimination of nuclear forces, they will need to negotiate an additional legal instrument. "This is a topic which is becoming increasingly relevant and important," the ambassador said. "We are likely to see more discussions on this matter in the time to come."

Indeed, the same day in Main Committee I, the need for negotiations on a Nuclear Weapons Convention once again featured prominently, with Egypt, Malaysia and Libya, among others, raising the call. New Zealand — which votes in favour of the annual UN General Assembly resolution on a convention — welcomed the UN Secretary-General's "strong push in his five-point plan for progress towards a world free of nuclear weapons".

Last year, 124 governments — roughly two-thirds of all UN member states — backed the General Assembly resolution, which is a follow-up to the International Court of Justice's landmark advisory opinion on the illegality of the threat or use of nuclear weapons.

The court held, unanimously, that governments have a legal obligation to achieve nuclear disarmament in all its aspects under strict and effective international control.

In addition to the legal obligation, they also have a moral responsibility to present and future generations to succeed. ■

A street action organized by IPPNW students and the Ban All Nukes Generation (BANg).

SPEECH

Campaigning for a Nuclear Weapons Convention

Tim Wright

I was just 12 when the mine ban treaty was negotiated, but I remember the campaign well. I visited Cambodia and Laos the year the treaty entered into force, 1999, and saw the suffering inflicted by these anti-human devices. To the public, and to me, there was an obvious humanitarian problem. But our response to nuclear weapons, on the whole, has been different. Despite the noble efforts of the *hibakusha*, and of nuclear test victims, to share their stories, to show the human horror caused by these weapons, we still perceive the nuclear problem largely as a political problem.

We talk a lot about nuclear postures, about deterrence theory, and the subtle details of doctrines of use — all abstract notions, which, after a time, make us psychically numb to the "human reality" of the problem. Delegitimizing nuclear weapons, and breaking down the discourses that permit their continued possession by a small number of nations, will be necessary if we're to succeed in the campaign for a Nuclear Weapons Convention. In this regard, I believe we have much to learn from Jody Williams and others involved in the campaign to rid the world of landmines.

On Sunday May 2, more than 15,000 people marched from Times Square to the United Nations on the eve of this review conference. We weren't calling for fewer nuclear weapons, or for greater efforts to stop their spread, or for tougher action to combat nuclear terrorism. What we were demanding of our leaders was a comprehensive ban — a Nuclear Weapons Convention — for total elimination. Likewise, the 20 million petition signatures presented to Ambassador Cabactulan, the president of the conference, were also focused on the need for an abolition treaty. But our message gave way to the official rhetoric. In the subway paper here in New York, there was a photo from the rally with the caption: "Thousands rally against the proliferation of nuclear weapons." Clearly, we need to devise ways to convey our message more effectively, and to break through the widespread misconception that stopping the spread of nuclear weapons is tantamount to eliminating nuclear risks. We must speak over the official discourse, and fundamentally change the debate.

It is true that there are some who profess the "vision" of a nuclear-weapon-free world, and even endorse the logic of pursuing a ban, but nonetheless find it appealing to focus attention solely on the so-called "rouge" states — those deemed too irresponsible, too irrational, to possess nuclear weapons. This approach will achieve nothing — certainly not a ban. It will serve only to reinforce the status quo of life-endangering paralysis, where the nuclear-weapon states cling onto their arsenals, and lull an unquestioning public into believing that the problem lies elsewhere. That, I suspect, is the strategy of the current US administration when it says, "We can't do this alone." It leads us to ignore, to our peril, the billions of dollars being invested under President Obama in the modernization of the US nuclear forces.

Likewise, my own country, Australia, has offered suggestions to the world for advancing nuclear abolition through the International Commission on Nuclear Non-Proliferation and Disarmament, yet our political leaders have been too gutless to denounce US extended deterrence. If we're to win the campaign for a Nuclear Weapons Convention, we must recognize that — for most of us — the problem is in our very own backyards. And so too is the solution.

Tim Wright with Jody Williams, co-laureate of the Nobel Peace Prize 1997.

A final challenge is to break the "deadlock mentality" which, for at least a decade, has contributed to a quite different kind of deterrence here at the United Nations: the deterrence of disarmament. We find it appropriate to celebrate the modest cuts to the US and Russian arsenals under the New Start agreement, even though they barely advance our cause. Our willingness to rejoice in this monumental non-accomplishment is proof that our expectations are far too low. Patting our leaders on the backs will do little good. We need to give them a big non-violent shove in the right direction.

For the last three years, ICAN campaigners around the world have quoted Jody Williams on many occasions. She sent a very powerful message to the launch of our campaign in Vienna in 2007: "Some governments tell us that a Nuclear Weapons Convention is premature and unlikely. Don't believe them. They told us the same thing about a mine ban treaty." And indeed they did. Jody may recall a letter published in 1995 by the then Australian foreign minister, Gareth Evans, who is now co-chair of the Japan–Australia commission on nuclear disarmament. He wrote to the editor of the *Canberra Times*: "You may regard landmines as 'patently inhumane'. But they are no more or less inhumane than other conventional weapons of war. Certainly, it would be nice to ban all weapons of war, but governments have a fundamental responsibility to provide for their nations' security and defence. That is why most governments will simply not accept a total landmines ban."

Well, in fact, they did. And in turn, they will also accept a Nuclear Weapons Convention — but not without a major civil society push. Mr. Evans, by the way, seems to have a somewhat more optimistic view of the world now. His commission report stated: "There is no reason why further work on [a Nuclear Weapons Convention] should not commence now, and with government support." So, to the diplomats in the room, we ask: what are you waiting for?

I would like to summarize my four key messages. If we're to succeed in this global effort for a Nuclear Weapons Convention, one, we need to demonstrate to publics — and governments — the "human reality" of the problem, by shifting the debate from postures to people. Two, our message must be made clearer. Zero is our goal. A convention is our method.

> "When we ask diplomats at this conference when we can begin negotiations, we expect to hear three simple words: *now we can*."

And there's no such thing as a responsible nuclear-weapon state. Three, we mustn't be fooled into allowing governments to play the game of deflecting responsibility to others. Four, we must break the deadlock mentality that is deterring disarmament. No obstacle on the path to abolition is insurmountable. We have the roadmap. Let's start the journey.

Finally, I would like to stress that this Review Conference is just the beginning. On the Saturday a week after it ends — Nuclear Abolition Day, June 5 — thousands of people across the world will respond to the conference outcome. Actions have been registered in dozens of countries: Australia, the US, the UK, Sri Lanka, Norway, Sweden, Pakistan, India, New Zealand, Italy, Swaziland, Hungary, Syria, the Philippines, Mauritius, Seychelles and Guinea, to name just a few. Our message will be simple: it's time for all governments to begin work on a Nuclear Weapons Convention. There is a legal imperative. There is a moral imperative. And it can be done. We're serious about this. And when we ask diplomats at this conference when we can begin negotiations, we expect to hear three simple words: "Now we can." ■

Tim Wright works for ICAN in New York. This speech was delivered on Friday, May 7, as part of a panel discussion with Jody Williams, Dr. Rebecca Johnson, Sen. Douglas Roche and Dr. Gunnar Westberg.

WEEK TWO

Manifestations of 'bad faith' by the nuclear-armed

Wednesday, May 12

The tired old mantra of arms control and incremental steps dominated discussions at the Review Conference, despite the growing push for a Nuclear Weapons Convention. All too many of the non-nuclear-weapon states seemed content in seeking only the most modest action on disarmament. Their calls, for the most part, lacked any sense of real urgency — even though it is clear that meaningful action for nuclear abolition is needed now, and cannot continue to be put on hold.

The attitude among many European governments at the Review Conference was that the NPT needed to be gently nursed back to "good health", when in fact the only effective remedy to the problem is for the nuclear-weapon states to be jolted into action. A take-it-easy, business-as-usual approach only reinforces the status quo of inaction on disarmament and the persistent threat of nuclear proliferation. Unless we radically alter the current trajectory, we will see only further disintegration of the NPT regime.

The nuclear-weapon states contend that it is premature to pursue negotiations on a Nuclear Weapons Convention — and thus to fulfil Article VI of the treaty — even though four decades have now passed since the NPT's entry into force. Based on this logic, should we also consider it premature to expect full compliance with the non-proliferation provisions of the treaty? This apparent double standard is certainly not in the spirit of the NPT bargain, and should be vehemently rejected.

Under the NPT, disarmament is more than a mere aspiration — it is a legal obligation. This was emphasized at events hosted by the International Association of Lawyers Against Nuclear Arms in the second week of the Review Conference. Not only must NPT parties "pursue" negotiations for disarmament, they must achieve that goal, as affirmed unanimously by the International Court of Justice in its 1996 advisory opinion on the illegality of nuclear weapons.

The nuclear-weapon states purport to be living up to their obligations — and some even produced glossy brochures for the Review Conference showcasing their "achievements" — but there is little reason to be satisfied. Despite all the hype surrounding New Start, for example, this treaty is unlikely to result in any true reduction in Russian and American nuclear forces. It is surely among the most celebrated non-accomplishments in recent political history.

> "Large investments in modernizing arsenals and facilities to build nuclear weapons are clear manifestations of bad faith."

The NPT stipulates that negotiations for disarmament must be pursued in "good faith". Large investments in modernizing arsenals and facilities to build nuclear weapons are clear manifestations of bad faith, and it is not enough to dismantle a few dozen old nuclear weapons each year, when global stockpiles still number in the tens of thousands. Non-nuclear-weapon states must express their clear dissatisfaction with the lack of progress, and demand that work begin now on a Nuclear Weapons Convention. This is the most realistic way to realize the NPT's core promise — complete elimination. ■

If you support a Nuclear Weapons Convention wear a red wristband.

Si vous supportez une Convention relative aux armes nucléaires, portez un bracelet rouge.

إذا كنت تَدْعم إتفاقية الأسلحةِ النوويةِ، ضع ربطة حمراء على رسغك

Si quiere dar apoyo a una Convención sobre Armas Nucleares, póngase una pulsera roja.

核兵器禁止条約を支持する方は真っ赤なリストバンドを付けましょう。

Wenn Sie eine Nuklearwaffenkonvention unterstützen, tragen Sie ein rotes Armband.

"A Nuclear Weapons Convention is possible, necessary and increasingly urgent. I can imagine a world without nuclear weapons, and I support ICAN."

His Holiness the Dalai Lama

A convention: the 'new start' we really need

Friday, May 14

At the end of the second week of the Review Conference, the first draft text was released. It included a 26-point action plan on nuclear disarmament. Adopting the language of US President Barack Obama from his landmark speech in Prague in 2009, the draft document would have had the conference resolve to achieve "the peace and security of a world without nuclear weapons", and agree on the need to implement Article VI of the treaty — the disarmament provision — "within a time-bound framework". Placing a timeline on multilateral disarmament would have been a historical first, but ultimately this was rejected.

Under the plan, the nuclear-weapon states would have been required to "convene consultations not later than 2011 to accelerate concrete progress on nuclear disarmament", and subsequent to these consultations UN Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon would have been invited to "convene an international conference in 2014 to consider ways and means to agree on a roadmap for the complete elimination of nuclear weapons within a specified timeframe, including by means of a universal, legal instrument".

The treaty parties would have affirmed that all states, in particular those with nuclear weapons, needed to "make special efforts to establish the legal framework required to achieve the final phase of nuclear disarmament and maintain a world without nuclear weapons". This detailed disarmament action plan would have helped put an end to the failed policy of nuclear arms control, and kick-start a genuine process for nuclear abolition through a binding convention.

The very same day that the draft text was released, the White House issued a press release outlining its plan to invest $US80 billion in modernizing its nuclear arsenal to ensure that it remains "safe, secure, and reliable". This is not the kind of "new start" that disarmament advocates had hoped to see in the United States. It is disingenuous at best, and deceptive at worst, for the United States to claim that it supports the "vision" of a nuclear-weapon-free world, when at the same time it is investing in maintaining its nuclear forces indefinitely into the future.

This kind of mass investment in nuclear weapons is a violation of the "good faith" obligation under the NPT to disarm, and yet few governments have been willing to criticize the Obama administration. That must change.

President Obama said in Prague last year that we are unlikely to realize a nuclear-weapon-free world in his lifetime. His administration risks this becoming a self-fulfilling prophecy if it continues to modernize US nuclear forces. We must demand much more of the nuclear-weapon states. There are 189 parties to the NPT, not five. The nuclear-weapon states must not be permitted to dictate the terms. Or else our dream of a future free from the nuclear menace will remain just that — a dream. ■

TEAR DOWN THE BARRIERS TO A NUCLEAR WEAPONS CONVENTION.

ADOPT AN ABOLITION AGENDER.

"Armament policies and the use of armed force have often been influenced by **misguided ideas about masculinity and strength.** An understanding of and emancipation from this traditional perspective might help to remove some of the hurdles on the road to disarmament and non-proliferation."

WMD Commission

WEEK THREE

The watering down of disarmament commitments

Monday, May 17

At the beginning of the third week of the Review Conference, governments provided preliminary feedback on the 26-point draft action plan on nuclear disarmament.

France argued that the language on elimination was too strong, preferring a watered-down commitment by states to create "the conditions for a world without nuclear weapons", rather than a commitment actually to achieve nuclear disarmament.

The European Union said it would "not express itself on the issue of timeframes", suggesting that there is division on this issue among member states. The two nuclear-weapon states in the European Union (France and the United Kingdom) have resisted any attempts to set benchmarks for the implementation of the Article VI obligation to disarm, while one EU member (Austria) has gone as far as calling for a Nuclear Weapons Convention. Ireland has also been a strong proponent of disarmament.

Iran expressed support for timeframes on achieving nuclear abolition, and stated its view that the Review Conference would not be successful unless it could reach an agreement to begin work on a convention: "We believe this is the time that once and for all we should set a clear deadline for the total elimination of nuclear weapons, and it would be possible through the negotiation of a Nuclear Weapons Convention."

Many non-government organizations made it clear to diplomats that they supported the specific proposal for the UN Secretary-General to convene an international conference before the next NPT Review Conference to consider a roadmap for the complete elimination of nuclear weapons within a specified timeframe, including by means of a Nuclear Weapons Convention. ■

Left to right: Tobias Bollinger, Barbara Streibl and Frederik Postelt from the Ban All Nukes Generation.

STATEMENT

Abolition Caucus response to draft disarmament text

Tuesday, May 18

The NGO Abolition Caucus of the Non-Proliferation Treaty Review Conference 2010 in general welcomes the *Report of Main Committee I: Chairman's Draft on Substantive Elements* and *Subsidiary Body I: Chairman's Draft Action Plan* released on Friday, 14 May 2010. The Caucus supports, in particular, the overall emphasis that both documents place on the need to achieve the complete elimination of nuclear weapons as a matter of urgency and within a specified timeframe.

The 26-point draft action plan prepared by the Chair of Subsidiary Body I sets out a concrete and detailed programme for advancing a nuclear-weapon-free world. It reflects a compromise between the overwhelming calls from civil society, together with a majority of countries, for the immediate commencement of negotiations on a Nuclear Weapons Convention and the positions of some states not yet ready to begin such negotiations.

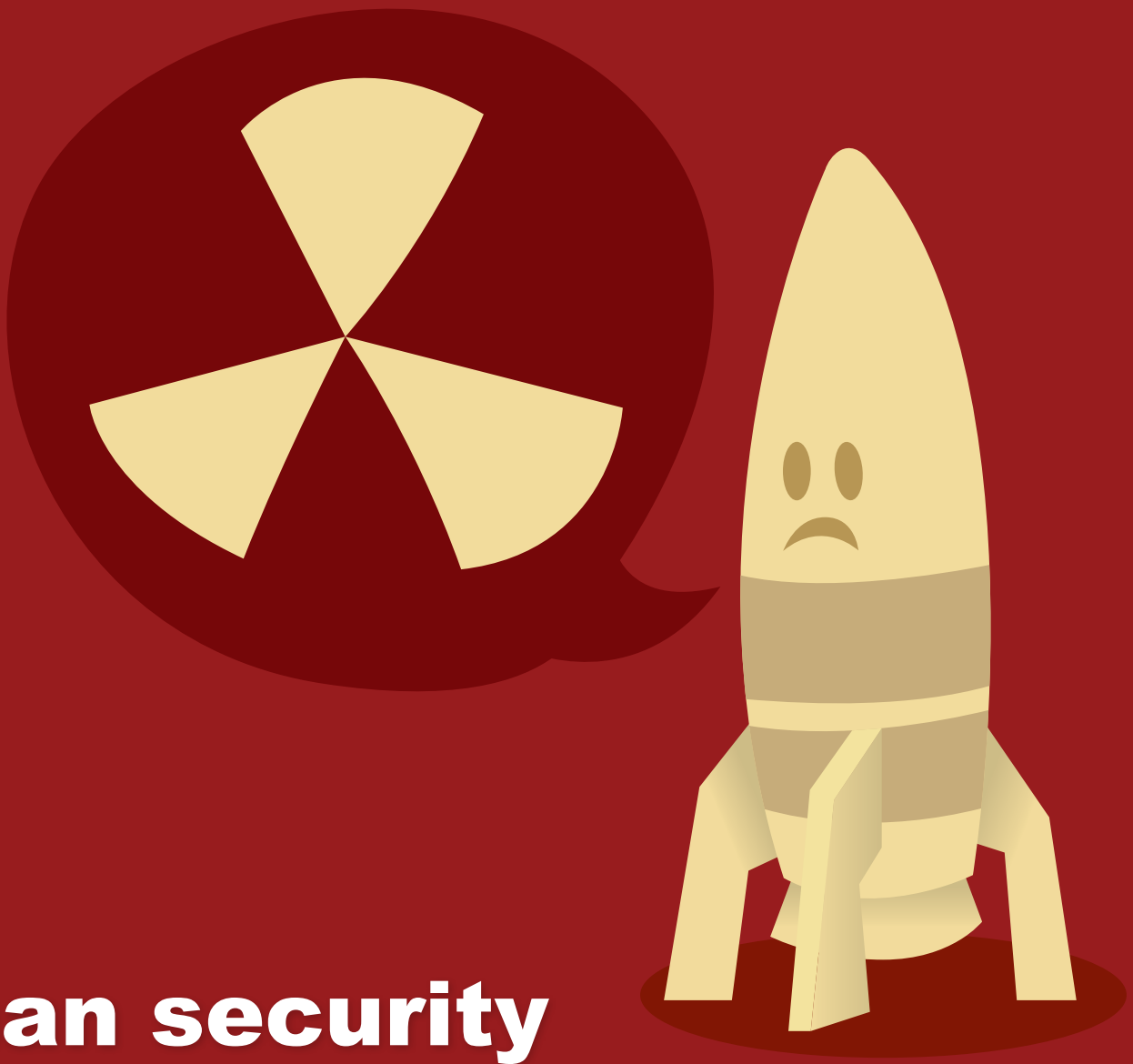
We support the affirmation by the Conference that all states, in particular all states possessing nuclear weapons, need to make special efforts to establish the legal framework required to achieve nuclear disarmament and maintain a world without nuclear weapons. This should include preparatory work, which can begin without delay. We also welcome the acknowledgement by the Conference that UN Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon's five-point proposal on nuclear disarmament, which includes consideration of a Nuclear Weapons Convention or a framework of mutually reinforcing instruments, contributes towards efforts to eliminate nuclear weapons.

The Caucus expresses its general support for Action 6 of the 26-point draft action plan, which calls for consultations not later than 2011 to accelerate concrete progress on nuclear disarmament aimed at the rapid conclusion of negotiations on reductions of all types of nuclear weapons, the removal of nuclear weapons stationed in Europe as part of a nuclear-sharing arrangement, a further diminishment of the role of nuclear weapons in military and security doctrines and policies, the announcement of declaratory policies against the use of nuclear weapons, a reduction in the operational readiness of nuclear weapon systems, the elimination of the risk of accidental or unauthorized use, and the enhancement of transparency measures. We believe that such consultations, rather than being limited to the nuclear-weapon states, should include other states and non-government organizations.

The Caucus also supports the proposal that states parties invite the UN Secretary-General to convene an international conference to consider ways and means to agree on a roadmap for the complete elimination of nuclear weapons within a specified timeframe, including by means of a universal legal instrument. With sufficient political will, this could occur before 2014. At this Review Conference, states parties should offer their support to these specific proposals for action, as well as others contained in the 26-point draft action plan.

Forty years after the entry into force of the Treaty, it is vital that parties adopt an outcome document that puts us clearly on track to nuclear abolition. ■

The Abolition Caucus met at 8.00am every day throughout the NPT Review Conference to coordinate NGO actions. Another statement was issued to address concerns relating to the use of nuclear power for electricity production.



Human security

It's not rocket science.
Negotiate a Nuclear Weapons Convention.

There's no shelter under this umbrella of insecurity

Tuesday, May 18

Much of the debate at the start of the third week of the Review Conference focused on the issue of a time-bound framework for the complete elimination of nuclear weapons. The Non-Aligned Movement and New Agenda Coalition expressed strong support for retaining this reference in the chair's draft report for Main Committee I, while three of the nuclear-weapon states — France, Russia and the United States — rejected the notion of imposing a timeframe on the implementation of their Article VI obligation to disarm.

Brazil expressed its deep regret that the last decade was a lost decade in terms of nuclear disarmament. It said: "Among the aims of the Non-Proliferation Treaty, the one that has not been achieved at all is the Article VI obligation." South Africa stressed the importance of providing certainty at the Review Conference to the non-nuclear-weapon states in order to avoid desperation and frustration: "When we come back for the next Review Conference, we want more members, not fewer members."

One issue that was not discussed nearly enough at the Review Conference is the effect that "extended nuclear deterrence" has on preventing meaningful progress towards nuclear disarmament. It is no coincidence that many of the governments that are opposed to beginning negotiations on a Nuclear Weapons Convention rely on the so-called "protection" of the US nuclear umbrella for their national security. These countries are the NATO members along with Australia, Japan and the Republic of Korea.

> "It is no coincidence that many of the governments that are opposed to beginning negotiations on a Nuclear Weapons Convention rely on the so-called 'protection' of the US nuclear umbrella for their national security."

By remaining under the nuclear umbrella, they give weight and credence to the misguided view that nuclear weapons bring security. A rejection of the concept of extended deterrence by any one or more of these states would contribute greatly to the delegitimization of nuclear weapons and the development of a global norm against reliance on them. It would also help to pave the way to a Nuclear Weapons Convention and the elimination of nuclear weapons. ■

Considering disarming, but not any time soon?

Wednesday, May 19

The second draft of the 26-point action plan on nuclear disarmament was released on the Wednesday of the third week. It had been reduced to a 24-point plan, and many of the elements applauded by civil society groups at the beginning of the week had either been removed or significantly watered down. The weaker the draft became, the clearer it was that we could not afford to rely on the NPT review process to provide the impetus for the urgent action needed to make abolition a reality.

In mockery of the revised draft, Ray Acheson from Reaching Critical Will wrote in *News In Review* — the daily NGO newsletter for the Review Conference — that the NPT states parties had only been able to agree on "potential approaches toward building consensus for looking at a framework for consideration of preparatory measures that could change the conditions for progress toward a step-by-step approach for considering nuclear disarmament".

The original draft required the nuclear-weapon states to hold consultations in 2011 aimed at accelerating progress on various issues related to disarmament — from ending the illegal practice of nuclear-sharing in Europe to taking nuclear weapons off hair-trigger alert — but under the first revision, consultations needed to be convened in a "timely" manner. Ultimately, it would have been up to the nuclear-weapon states to define "timely" (this was later changed to 2014).

Under the revised draft, the UN Secretary-General would still have been invited to convene a conference for the complete elimination of nuclear weapons, including by means of a universal legal instrument, but there was no longer a set date for doing so (originally, it was to be held in 2014; it was deleted from the final document adopted on May 28).

In general, the revised draft lacked any sense of real urgency. We had called for concrete steps with specified dates, but all that the parties had managed to agree on by this stage in the conference were vague commitments to "consider" ways to move things forward. Clearly, despite all the rhetoric about a nuclear-weapon-free world, there is a lack of genuine political will from all five nuclear-weapon states — and many NATO members, among others — to set us on the track to nuclear abolition. The revised draft included a new "action" for a subsidiary body to be set up in the Conference on Disarmament (CD) in Geneva to "exchange views and information" on steps towards reducing arsenals and eventually eliminating nuclear weapons. Trying to hold such discussions in the CD — a body unable to produce anything in a decade and a half — will all but guarantee the further stagnation of the disarmament process. What should we tell the 20 million people who signed petitions calling on their leaders to agree at the Review Conference to begin work now on a Nuclear Weapons Convention? Or to the hundreds of *hibakusha* who travelled to New York to make their desperate plea for no more Hiroshimas and Nagasakis? Or to the many thousands of people around the world who have suffered from the effects of nuclear testing and uranium mining? That the best their governments could come up with at the Review Conference, 40 years after the NPT entered into force, were a few vague promises to "consider" among themselves possible options for one day, perhaps not any time soon, moving disarmament forward, but only a little? ■

DROP THE RHETORIC, NOT THE BOMBS.

IT'S TIME TO TURN THE VISION OF A NUCLEAR-WEAPON-FREE WORLD INTO A REALITY.

WEEK THREE

Putting human beings at the centre of the debate

Friday, May 21

At the end of the third week, ICAN was honoured to co-host an event on disarmament education with six *hibakusha* — victims of the atomic bombings of Hiroshima and Nagasaki — who, since the start of the Review Conference, had been visiting schools in New York with our partner organization Hibakusha Stories. In their testimonies, they emphasized the importance of bringing the catastrophic humanitarian consequences of nuclear war into the discussion about nuclear disarmament at the United Nations.

ICAN is dedicated to educating students and the wider public about the gravity of the nuclear problem with the aim of empowering them to promote a nuclear-weapon-free world. More than 40 governments expressed their support for disarmament education at the Review Conference. We encouraged all of them, and others, to get behind our efforts. Public education will be vital to the success of the campaign for nuclear abolition.

On Saturday Desmond Tutu, a patron of ICAN, wrote an article for Britain's *Guardian* newspaper in which he called on the NPT Review Conference to shift the focus from the failed policy of arms control to abolition. "Just as we have outlawed other categories of particularly inhuman and indiscriminate weapons … we must now turn our attention to outlawing the most iniquitous weapons of all," he wrote.

He criticized the lack of progress made by the nuclear-weapon states towards the goal of complete nuclear disarmament, noting that none of them appears to be preparing for a future without these terrifying devices. "Forty years after the NPT entered into force, we should seriously question whether we are on track to abolition." He called on all nations to "radically alter our trajectory now", and warned that we "must not await another Hiroshima or Nagasaki before finally mustering the political will to banish these weapons from global arsenals".

According to Tutu, the most obvious and realistic path to a nuclear-weapon-free world is for nations to negotiate a legally binding ban, which would include a timeline for elimination and establish an institutional framework to ensure compliance. "Governments should agree at this NPT Review Conference to toss their nuclear arms into the dustbin of history, along with those other monstrous evils of our time — slavery and apartheid," he wrote. ■

OPINION

It's time for governments to abolish nuclear weapons

Desmond Tutu

This year the nuclear bomb turns 65 — an appropriate age, by international standards, for compulsory retirement. But do our leaders have the courage and wisdom to rid the planet of this ultimate menace? The five-yearly review of the ailing nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty, currently underway at the United Nations in New York, will test the strength of governments' commitment to a nuclear-weapon-free world.

If they are serious about realizing this vision, they will work now to shift the focus from the failed policy of nuclear arms control, which assumes that a select few states can be trusted with these weapons, to nuclear abolition. Just as we have outlawed other categories of particularly inhuman and indiscriminate weapons — from biological and chemical agents to anti-personnel landmines and cluster munitions — we must now turn our attention to outlawing the most iniquitous weapons of all.

Gains in nuclear disarmament to date have come much too slowly. More than 23,000 nuclear arms remain in global stockpiles, breeding enmity and mistrust among nations, and casting a shadow over us all. None of the nuclear-armed countries appears to be preparing for a future without these terrifying devices. Their failure to disarm has spurred nuclear proliferation, and will continue to destabilize the planet unless we radically alter our trajectory now. Forty years after the NPT entered into force, we should seriously question whether we are on track to abolition.

Nuclear disarmament is not an option for governments to take up or ignore. It is a moral duty owed by them to their own citizens, and to humanity as a whole. We must not await another Hiroshima or Nagasaki before finally mustering the political will to banish these weapons from global arsenals. Governments should agree at this NPT review conference to toss their nuclear arms into the dustbin of history, along with those other monstrous evils of our time — slavery and apartheid.

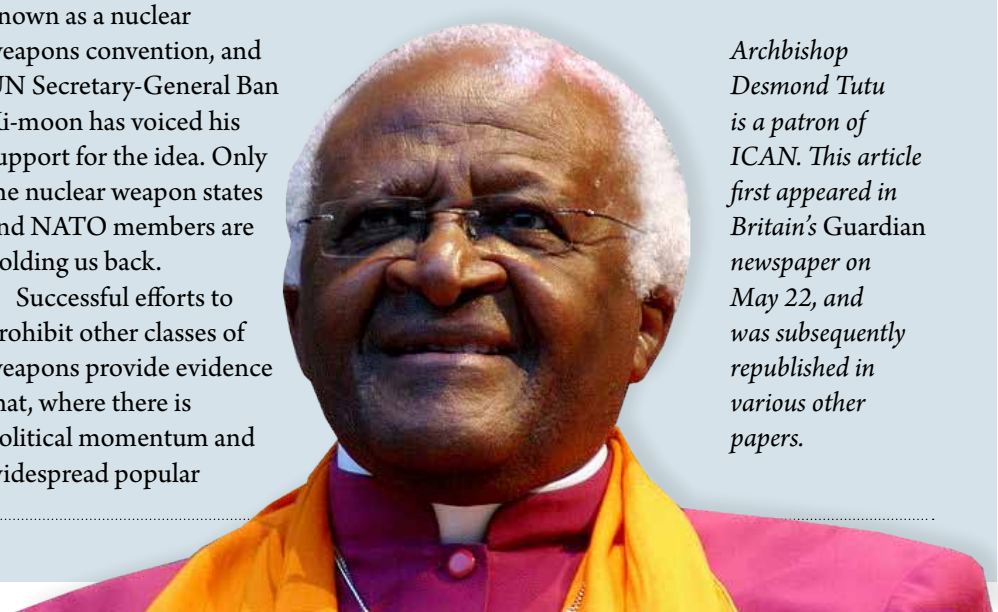
Sceptics tell us, and have told us for many years, that we are wasting our time pursuing the dream of a world without nuclear weapons, as it can never be realized. But more than a few people said the same about ending entrenched racial segregation in South Africa and abolishing slavery in the United States. Often they had a perceived interest in maintaining the status quo. Systems and policies that devalue human life, and deprive us all of our right to live in peace with each other, are rarely able to withstand the pressure created by a highly organized public that is determined to see change.

The most obvious and realistic path to a nuclear-weapon-free world is for nations to negotiate a legally binding ban, which would include a timeline for elimination and establish an institutional framework to ensure compliance. Two-thirds of all governments have called for such a treaty, known as a nuclear weapons convention, and UN Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon has voiced his support for the idea. Only the nuclear weapon states and NATO members are holding us back.

Successful efforts to prohibit other classes of weapons provide evidence that, where there is political momentum and widespread popular support, obstacles which may at first appear insurmountable can very often be torn down. Nuclear abolition is the democratic wish of the world's people, and has been our goal almost since the dawn of the atomic age. Together, we have the power to decide whether the nuclear era ends in a bang or worldwide celebration.

> "The most obvious and realistic path to a nuclear-weapon-free world is for nations to negotiate a legally binding ban."

Last April in the Czech capital of Prague, President Barack Obama announced that the United States would seek the peace and security of a world without nuclear weapons, but he warned that nations probably would not eliminate their arsenals in his lifetime. I am three decades older than the US president, yet I am confident that both of us will live to see the day when the last nuclear weapon is dismantled. We just need to think outside the bomb. ■



Archbishop Desmond Tutu is a patron of ICAN. This article first appeared in Britain's Guardian *newspaper on May 22, and was subsequently republished in various other papers.*

WEEK FOUR

We all have a legitimate interest in disarmament

Monday, May 24

On the first day of the final week, the nuclear-weapon states publicly opposed almost every element of the draft disarmament action plan that had any chance of actually advancing nuclear abolition. They made it perfectly clear that they are not at all serious about realizing their stated "vision" of a nuclear-weapon-free world. Despite a change in P5 rhetoric from previous NPT review conferences, there is almost no change in their actual positions. They remain intent on preserving the status quo.

Until the fourth week, the United Kingdom had not played a prominent role in the negotiations because of the recent change of government. However, it appeared on Monday of the final week that their diplomats had received instructions from London, and these instructions — as ICAN vice-chair Dr. Rebecca Johnson put it on her blog — "are to get rid of anything resembling focused, comprehensive, practical or progressive action towards building a world free of nuclear weapons".

France called for the reference to the UN Secretary-General's five-point plan on disarmament, which includes the consideration of a Nuclear Weapons Convention as a way of fulfilling Article VI of the NPT, to be moved from the forward-looking action plan to the review section of the outcome document. This suggests that, in France's view, the Secretary-General's plan is a spent initiative that should not have any relevance to future discussions.

A number of Non-Aligned Movement nations, as well as the New Agenda Coalition, voiced strong opposition to the P5's concerted push to destroy the draft disarmament action plan — which, at the end of the third week, appeared to have broad support. Many of the non-nuclear-weapon states had been willing to compromise on various aspects of the draft, but the nuclear-weapon states had been unwilling to reciprocate.

> "We must not allow the nuclear-weapon states to continue obstructing progress."

Algeria — not about to give in to the demands of the P5 — argued for a further reference to a Nuclear Weapons Convention to be inserted into the document. It suggested that the conference reaffirm that "the strict observance of all the provisions of the NPT remains central to achieving the shared objectives of the total elimination of nuclear weapons, including through the negotiation of a Nuclear Weapons Convention, …"

As ICAN supporter Desmond Tutu wrote in *The Guardian* two days earlier, "Nuclear disarmament is not an option for governments to take up or ignore. It is a moral duty owed by them to their own citizens, and to humanity as a whole." We must not allow the nuclear-weapon states to continue obstructing progress. The entire world has a legitimate interest in realizing the NPT's promise of nuclear disarmament. ■

UN Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon (below)

WEEK FOUR

Alternative preambles to the draft declaration

Tuesday, May 25

At midnight on Monday of the final week, the president's first draft of the final declaration for the NPT Review Conference was released. It was more or less a compilation of the reports from the main committees and subsidiary bodies, with the addition of a preamble. NGOs prepared a revision of the preamble, which is below along with the real version. Try to guess which is which.

Final Declaration — Version 1

THE STATES PARTY TO THE NPT,

- ***Reiterating*** their commitment to the effective and full implementation of the objectives of the Treaty, the decisions and resolution on the Middle East of the 1995 Review and Extension Conference and the Final Document of the 2000 Review Conference,
- ***Seeking*** to achieve the peace and security of a world without nuclear weapons,
- ***Recognizing*** that the Treaty is essential to international peace and security, and to the achievement of nuclear disarmament and of general and complete disarmament under strict and effective international control,
- ***Acknowledging*** the grave dangers that are inherent in the continued existence of nuclear weapons,
- ***Reaffirming*** that universal adherence to the Treaty would greatly strengthen international peace and security,
- ***Firmly convinced*** of the importance of maintaining an acceptable balance of mutual responsibilities and obligations among all States Party to the Treaty,
- ***Reaffirming*** the fundamental importance of full and strict compliance by all States with all provisions of the Treaty, and recognizes that full implementation of all provisions of the Treaty is essential to preserve the integrity of the Treaty and continuation of trust among States parties,
- ***Determined*** to advance global nuclear disarmament, to prevent the proliferation of nuclear weapons or nuclear explosive devices, and to promote peaceful uses of nuclear energy,
- ***Recognizing*** the vital role of safeguards implemented by the International Atomic Energy Agency in verifying the peaceful uses of nuclear energy by all States Party to the Treaty,
- ***Underscoring*** their determination to improve the implementation of the Treaty and to strengthen its authority,

Final Declaration — Version 2

THE STATES PARTY TO THE NPT,

- ***Iterating***, for the first time, their collective commitment to commence negotiations now on a nuclear weapons convention, backed by a strong system of verification, as proposed by the Secretary-General of the United Nations in his five-point plan on nuclear disarmament,
- ***Seeking*** to achieve the peace and security of a world without nuclear weapons as a near-term goal, not a far-off vision,
- ***Recognizing*** that a nuclear weapons convention is essential to international peace and security, and to the achievement of nuclear disarmament,
- ***Acknowledging*** that the atomic bombings of Hiroshima and Nagasaki in August 1945 were crimes against humanity, and that nuclear testing and uranium mining have had a catastrophic impact,
- ***Reaffirming*** that universal adherence to a nuclear weapons convention would greatly strengthen international peace and security,
- ***Firmly convinced*** of the importance of maintaining forever a world without nuclear weapons,
- ***Reaffirming*** the fundamental importance of full compliance with article VI of the Treaty, which requires all States to negotiate nuclear disarmament, including by means of a nuclear weapons convention,
- ***Determined*** to advance global nuclear disarmament, to prevent the proliferation of nuclear weapons, to promote renewable energy sources, and to redirect nuclear weapons expenditure towards achieving the Millennium Development Goals,
- ***Recognizing*** the vital role of the International Renewable Energy Agency in ensuring a sustainable future,
- ***Underscoring*** their determination to transform the rhetorical vision of a world without nuclear weapons into a reality without further delay,
- ***Thanking*** civil society for their useful contributions,

WEEK FOUR

Building the pressure for nuclear abolition

Wednesday, May 26

Negotiations on the final outcome document for the NPT Review Conference continued late into the night on Wednesday of the final week. Although we were unable to observe the discussions — a note on the conference room door read, in pink highlighter, "No NGOs, No Press" — many diplomats informed us of what was being said on the inside. It had become clear that there was little chance that the conference would adopt a progressive, forward-looking disarmament action plan.

We need to devise a new strategy for advancing abolition, because the current step-by-step incremental approach is not yielding sufficient results. The nuclear-weapon states remain unashamedly uncommitted to nuclear disarmament, and too few of the non-nuclear-weapon states have any real plan or determination to lift us out of the quagmire.

It is time for fresh thinking on disarmament — or, as a group of American youth have said, it is time to "think outside the bomb". ICAN has called on all governments to pursue a Nuclear Weapons Convention, which would establish the legal and institutional framework needed to achieve a world free of the nuclear menace. The NPT, with all of its flaws, will not bring us to zero.

At the Review Conference, we saw more governments accept the need for a comprehensive convention, but it is still largely regarded as part of a long-term plan, rather than a near-term goal. Preparing now to commence negotiations would stimulate progress on nuclear disarmament. It appears currently that most if not all of the nuclear-weapon states will be followers in this process. We must not wait for them to take the lead. They will most likely be dragged into it because the international pressure to join will be so great that they cannot resist.

Today, such pressure is minimal, but there are signs that it may be building. Why should we be content living in a world with 23,000 nuclear weapons?

> "We must not wait for the nuclear-weapon states to take the lead on a Nuclear Weapons Convention. They will naturally be followers in this process — dragged into it because the international pressure to join will be so great that they cannot resist."

Whose lives will be sacrificed before we finally wake up and realize that nuclear abolition is not an option but an urgent necessity? Diplomats and politicians must seriously ask themselves whether their country is doing enough to advance the goal of elimination.

Midway through the final week of the Review Conference, the new British foreign secretary, William Hague, disclosed for the first time the size of the United Kingdom's nuclear arsenal. It was intended to be a positive contribution to the debate. But it was hard not to be more than a little disappointed, given that the arsenal consists of 225 nuclear warheads — 65 more than disarmament advocates had thought to be the case.

ICAN would have preferred Mr. Hague to announce that the new government would not pursue renewal of the nation's fleet of ageing nuclear-armed Trident submarines. ■

WEEK FOUR

A modest draft disarmament action plan

Thursday, May 27

On Thursday evening, a revised version of the draft final document for the NPT Review Conference was released. The United States, Russia, the United Kingdom and France were largely successful in removing from the document anything requiring them to take meaningful short-term steps to advance disarmament. Many of the disarmament "actions" are now phrased as vague aspirations.

Under the draft document, the Review Conference "notes with concern that the total estimated number of nuclear weapons deployed and stockpiled still amounts to several thousand", and "expresses its deep concern at the continued risk for humanity represented by the possibility that these weapons could be used and the catastrophic humanitarian consequences that would result from the use of nuclear weapons".

It affirms "that the final phase of the nuclear disarmament process and other related measures should be pursued within an agreed legal framework, which a majority of States parties believe should include specified timelines". This is a welcome inclusion, although there is no reason why the development of such a framework should not begin now.

Disarmament action plan

- ***Unequivocal undertaking:*** Under the "action-focused" section of the draft document, the conference resolves "to seek a safer world for all and to achieve the peace and security of a world without nuclear weapons", and reaffirms "the unequivocal undertaking of the nuclear-weapon states to accomplish the total elimination of their nuclear arsenals leading to nuclear disarmament". Such an undertaking was made in 2000 — but it turned out to be quite equivocal. Will this be the same?
- ***Undiminished security:*** The document states that "significant steps" leading to nuclear disarmament should promote international stability and be "based on the principle of increased and undiminished security for all". This in effect places conditions on nuclear disarmament — for example, reductions in conventional forces by certain states and the resolution of regional conflicts.
- ***Humanitarian law:*** One of the more positive aspects of the document — but not an "action" as such — is the affirmation by all states of the need to comply with "applicable international law, including international humanitarian law", at all times. However, this is a slight rewording of the original draft text, which now seems to leave open the possibility that international humanitarian law may not, in all circumstances, apply to the use of nuclear weapons.
- ***Framework for abolition:*** The conference encourages in particular those states with the largest nuclear arsenals — the United States and Russia — to lead efforts to reduce and eliminate all types of nuclear weapons. It calls on all nuclear-weapon states to "undertake concrete disarmament efforts" and affirms that all states need to "make special efforts to establish the necessary framework to achieve and maintain a world without nuclear weapons".
- ***Five-point plan:*** In this context, the conference "notes" the UN Secretary-General's five-point plan on nuclear disarmament (twice), which proposes consideration of negotiations on a Nuclear Weapons Convention or a framework of separate mutually reinforcing instruments. However, unlike previous drafts, this version of the declaration does not state that the Secretary-General's proposal contributes to the goal of a nuclear-weapon-free world. It falls short of endorsing his plan.
- ***Modernization:*** The "refurbishment" of nuclear forces was a heated element of the debate at the conference. The final text refers to this, but not in any actionable way. The conference, rather than requiring the nuclear-weapon states to cease modernization, merely "recognizes the legitimate interests of non-nuclear-weapon states in the constraining by the nuclear-weapon states of the development and qualitative improvement of nuclear weapons and ending the development of advanced new types of nuclear weapons".
- ***Arsenal reductions:*** The nuclear-weapon states commit to undertake further efforts to reduce and "ultimately" eliminate all types of nuclear weapons, deployed and non-deployed, including through unilateral, bilateral, regional and multilateral measures. The nuclear-weapon states have argued that they are already engaged in such efforts.
- ***Bilateral negotiations:*** Russia and the United States are "encouraged to continue discussions" on follow-on measures in order to achieve deeper reductions in their nuclear arsenals. During the Review Conference, a number of states expressed dissatisfaction at the modest reductions under the New Start agreement.

- ***Engaging in discussions:*** Earlier drafts of the action plan included "consultations" among the nuclear-weapon states on various issues aimed at paving the way towards negotiations on elimination. However, now they are simply called upon to "promptly engage" with a view to "rapidly moving towards an overall reduction in the global stockpile of all types of nuclear weapons". This action still includes a reference to nuclear-sharing, but it is very vague: the nuclear-weapon states are called on to "address the question of all nuclear weapons regardless of their type or their location".
- ***No-first-use:*** China's proposal for dialogue leading to a no-first-use declaration by all of the nuclear-weapon states did not find its way into the final draft. China is the only one of the P5 to have adopted such a policy. The nuclear-weapon states are also called upon to "consider the legitimate interest of non-nuclear-weapon states in further reducing the operational status of nuclear weapons systems".
- ***Secretary-General's conference:*** The greatest disappointment of the final draft is the deletion of the paragraph concerning a conference to be convened by the UN Secretary-General to consider the need for a universal legal instrument in advancing the goal of elimination. This aspect of the earlier draft had been welcomed by many NGOs.

The draft final declaration showed that there is still a sizeable gap between the rhetoric of P5 leaders and what they are actually prepared to do, in concrete terms, to make their "vision" of a nuclear-weapon-free world a reality. Their collective refusal to achieve disarmament threatens the nuclear non-proliferation regime, international law in general, indeed the very future of humanity. When so much is at stake, we need to be demanding much more. ■

WEEK FOUR

Impetus for real action, not an excuse for inaction

Friday, May 28

On the final day of the Review Conference, the 189 parties to the NPT adopted by consensus a final document, which includes the action plan on nuclear disarmament. ICAN welcomed the re-affirmation by the nuclear-weapon states of their "unequivocal undertaking" to disarm, but expressed disappointment that many of the disarmament "actions" are phrased more as aspirational goals than firm time-bound commitments to disarm.

In the second half of the conference, the Non-Aligned Movement proposed more than 200 amendments to the original draft document, mostly aimed at attaching timelines to disarmament undertakings. However, they were largely unsuccessful in doing so. A number of NAM countries stated their regret on Friday that it had not been possible to broker a stronger agreement.

Many countries have vowed to keep up the pressure on the nuclear-weapon states to make meaningful progress in eliminating their nuclear arsenals over the next few years. NAM, for example, said after the final document was adopted that it would "vigorously pursue" as one of its key priorities the prompt commencement of negotiations on a Nuclear Weapons Convention "as the route to realizing a world free from nuclear weapons by the year 2025".

The final document is the first to refer to a Nuclear Weapons Convention — not once, but twice — but it falls well short of calling for negotiations to begin now on such a treaty, as is supported by a majority of governments each year in the UN General Assembly. Nevertheless, the inclusion of two references to a convention in the text — for which many governments fought very hard — provides civil society with a useful foundation for continuing to build the pressure to begin negotiations.

Dr. Rebecca Johnson, vice-chair of ICAN, told media: "The action plan on nuclear disarmament as well as the inability of the NPT machinery to deal with non-compliance and to strengthen its own safeguards agreements, as illustrated in what was left out of the final document, make it now clear to everyone the need to initiate a process leading to negotiations on a Nuclear Weapons Convention that will do away with the NPT distinction between nuclear haves and have-nots and comprehensively ban nuclear weapons for all."

We are pleased that the need for a comprehensive nuclear abolition treaty was a central element of the debate at the Review Conference, with a large majority of governments prepared to put their weight behind the idea. Forty years after the entry into force of the NPT, there is a high degree of dissatisfaction with the lack of progress in achieving a nuclear-weapon-free world. Non-nuclear-weapon states are looking for a new approach.

A Nuclear Weapons Convention, rather than "derailing" the disarmament process (as some have claimed), would put us on track — for the first time — to nuclear abolition. The next few years will be crucial in building momentum towards that goal. We must not let down our guard and hope that all will be well simply because governments were able to agree on an outcome document at the Review Conference. It should provide the impetus for real action, not an excuse for inaction. ■

SPEECH

Seeing through the fog to reach the maintaintop

Dr. Rebecca Johnson

In their second *Wall Street Journal* article of January 2008, Henry Kissinger, George Shultz, Sam Nunn and William Perry liken the goal of a world free of nuclear weapons to "the top of a very tall mountain". They see it as desirable and recognize the necessity of climbing to higher ground, as there are too many dangers inherent in either staying where we are or, worse still, sliding back down into proliferation chaos. But to them, the goal and the route to get there are both out of sight. We agree that the dangers of clinging to the status quo are far greater than the challenges of climbing towards disarmament, but we think humanity is closer to achieving the summit than the cold warriors have realized.

In fact, we are so confident that the objective of a nuclear-weapon-free world is reachable in our lifetimes that we can envision ourselves at the summit, looking back at the path we took to get here, and realizing that the difficulties, while formidable, were overcome with persistence, creative problem solving and flexibility to find different ways when paths we were following became obstructed. There are better ways than carrying on up the steps bequeathed by the old map of Cold War arms control and non-proliferation in isolation from disarmament. The security environment is changing, the Cold War fogs are clearing, and we should recognize that where we reach in 2010 will give us the vantage point from which to survey the options and determine the optimum route to bring us to the goal in a safe, secure and timely manner.

On any such journey, we are likely to encounter obstacles and perils along the way. A prevailing belief in nuclear weapons for deterrence is one such near-term obstacle. Reducing the role and value accorded to nuclear weapons in military doctrines and security policies are therefore essential measures to take now. We are helped by the knowledge that a world without nuclear weapons must be a safer place than the one we inhabit now, not least because a single mistake with nuclear weapons could prove uniquely catastrophic. We're human, so mistakes happen — made by militaries and political leaders as well as by the rest of us.

> "There are better ways than carrying on up the steps bequeathed by the old map of Cold War arms control and non-proliferation in isolation from disarmament."

Nuclear weapons emerged out of the bloodiest century in human history, during which almost every part of the world suffered wars driven by nationalism, greed for resources or land, and fear or hatred of other people. These conflicts have often been framed in terms of clashing religions or cultures. They have been carried forward with distorted notions of power and the masculine fighting role, fuelled by arms manufacturers and pushers of guns, bombs, and destructive arms of all kinds. Abolishing nuclear weapons will not of itself solve these problems, and human security requires that we reduce reliance on other weapons, too.

Up to 15,000 people march through New York for nuclear abolition on May 2 (right).

We have to move away from old patterns of aggressive national security approaches and build better tools for collective human security, including "soft power" means of cooperative humanitarian engagement. Solving these endemic security problems, which have haunted human history, cannot and must not be a precondition for nuclear disarmament. As US president John F. Kennedy told the UN General Assembly in 1961, it is simply not credible to "maintain that disarmament must await the settlement of all disputes" or that "the quest for disarmament is a sign of weakness". At the same time, it is clear that solving the political, technical and security challenges of abolishing nuclear arms will be made more difficult if some countries seek to control, manage or terrorize others with space-based technologies or conventional arsenals with mass destructive capabilities. Too often governments agree to ban a weapon only when they have created something to do the same military job more cheaply, destructively or efficiently.

Challenging and overcoming such a mindset will have to be part of the negotiating process. But if we postpone the elimination of nuclear weapons until the world has achieved some ideal threshold of peace and stability, we will get neither disarmament nor security. If we get to work now on eradicating these uniquely powerful, indiscriminate and inhumane weapons, other changes will inevitably be part of the process. The nuclear-free world is not going to be today's world minus atomic weapons. Abolishing war is an even higher mountaintop, and will require a lot more climbing for the human race; but at least we will have reached the point of avoiding radioactive catastrophe and we will be able to make paths towards reducing conflict and enhancing human security, which includes tackling climate chaos and avoiding environmental disaster. A world without nuclear weapons will make a good base camp for continuing the climb.

This is how we should understand Article VI's ultimate injunction to pursue general and complete disarmament: not that there must be complete global disarmament before the nuclear arsenals can be eliminated, as some of the nuclear-weapon states seem to assert, but that in moving towards the abolition of nuclear weapons we need to tackle the causes of instability and insecurity, including coercive military force and the possession, trafficking and use of other types of weapons. Negotiations on the reduction and elimination of nuclear arsenals are not discretionary; they are required by Article VI, which mandates that the negotiations are to be conducted in good faith and in accordance with international law. And they must be brought to conclusion, as the International Court of Justice unanimously advised.

> "As any climber will tell you, the destination and the journey are equally important. Nuclear disarmament is both a destination and a process."

As any climber will tell you, the destination and the journey are equally important. Nuclear disarmament is both a destination and a process; and a multilateral treaty — some kind of framework or comprehensive Nuclear Weapons Convention that will codify in law and practice both the prohibition of the acquisition and use of nuclear weapons and also the safe and secure elimination of existing arsenals — has aspects of both. Getting to the right destination will require paying careful attention to the verifiable dismantlement and elimination of the existing warheads and delivery vehicles and to making sure the fissile materials and other components are disposed of or stored so that they cannot be stolen, re-acquired or used for weapons in the future. All this must be done in ways that minimize the hazards for the environment and our health, and provide confidence against cheating, break-out and the acquisition of nuclear weapon capabilities by terrorist governments or actors in the future.

At the 2009 preparatory committee meeting for this Review Conference, we recommended to you that a Nuclear Weapons Convention negotiated in good faith by the international community is "required to achieve the nuclear-weapon-free world envisioned by the NPT". Achievement of such a treaty remains the central aim, and a key rallying point, of most international NGOs working in this field, and we are pleased to report to you today that support for such a convention is growing around the world, and we thank those of you that have come to this conference prepared to discuss the merits of a comprehensive framework for nuclear disarmament and to set out — together with your citizens and international civil society — on this difficult but necessary trek to the top of the mountain.

As noted by UN Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon, the Model Nuclear Weapons Convention submitted to you in 2007 is "a good point of departure". This draft, initiated more than 15 years ago by civil society scientists, lawyers and practitioners, was developed as a resource, in the knowledge that once real negotiations begin, the multilateral outcome could look quite different. Recent treaty-making history shows that civil society participation will be essential for the success of such negotiations, and we are prepared to support you with our expertise and experience, and to urge you on when the road gets rough. The 1997 NGO model draft, updated and published as *Securing Our Survival* in 2007, gives a careful and thought-provoking overview of the issues that will help as they come to be addressed in actual negotiations.

The challenge for us today is to get started on this process to achieve "the peace and security of a world without nuclear weapons" that President Obama and many others have called for. One way is for a group of nations and representative experts to come together and work out the practical and diplomatic means to prepare the way for negotiating a Nuclear Weapons Convention.

These preliminary discussions will help assess the pros and cons of existing negotiating fora and other options for convening negotiations. Development of a fast-track process would come next, with preparations structured so as to draw all the nuclear-armed states — non-NPT as well as the P5 — into negotiations sooner rather than later.

Sometimes — as when the Partial Test Ban Treaty, the Comprehensive Test Ban Treaty, and even the NPT were negotiated — it is necessary to get started without all the relevant states on board. Experience suggests that once the process starts, most if not all of the hold-out states decide to join negotiations before the endgame. And once the treaty is signed — even before it fully enters into force — its normative and legal impact will be to constrain everyone, whether they have formally acceded or not. While the non-nuclear-weapon states will no doubt provide early leadership, we hope that one or more nuclear-armed states will see the writing on the wall and join the driving group early in the process.

President Obama has said he wants to provide such leadership, and we continue to hope that Britain will decide to ditch the expensive mistake of Trident replacement, for which the UK has to rely on the United States, fulfil its pledge to be a "disarmament laboratory", and contribute its skills and expertise to making the nuclear-free world a reality. China, India and Pakistan have all voted in favour of a Nuclear Weapons Convention in the General Assembly, so we look to them too to walk the walk as well as talking the talk.

Judging from their nuclear doctrines and statements, France and Russia currently appear the least likely to join a leadership group, but no one should forget how the Russian and French Presidents were the first to declare moratoria on nuclear testing in 1991 and 1992, thereby paving the way for CTBT negotiations. As for Israel, a nuclear-free Middle East would serve the interests of that conflict-ridden part of our planet, and working towards this regional objective will be mutually reinforcing as we also work for a nuclear-free world.

In history, a shock, crisis or significant political event has often provided the stepping stone for change. The 1962 Cuban Missile Crisis, for example, influenced the United States, the Soviet Union and Britain to finalize a Partial Test Ban Treaty and paved the way for the NPT. Undoubtedly, the use of a nuclear weapon somewhere in the world would provide a terrible shock and, if it did not escalate into nuclear war, could lead swiftly to global disarmament — but at what an appalling cost for the victims and for the world. Far better to create a responsible political shift now, before there is any further nuclear use or accident. It may be that there are different paths that can get us to the top of the mountain. At some stage, however, these will need to converge at a solid bridge for negotiations. Such a bridge is already being built by civil society and a growing number of governments. Learning from the *hibakusha* survivors and from scientists and doctors who have studied the effects of nuclear weapon explosions, it has become clear that — no matter what the justification, provocation or intention — nuclear weapon attacks and threats must become recognized in law as war crimes and crimes against humanity. Deterring aggression is a legitimate security objective, but a policy of deterrence constructed around so devastating a weapon is indefensible.

The op-eds from the four Cold War leaders changed the game by making it respectable to advocate nuclear disarmament. But from where they presently stand, they think the mountaintop is too far away to be seen. If they moved slightly, in the direction of reducing the role and value accorded to nuclear weapons for deterrence, they would be able to see that what they thought were clouds obscuring a faraway mountaintop was nothing more than a layer of Cold War fog swirling around them and obscuring reality.

They need to move a few steps further to reach the bridge that will devalue nuclear weapons and provide a crossover to nuclear abolition. From our vantage point already on the bridge, civil society can show you the legal and political footholds to assist you to climb above the fog to this bridge, from where the goal of a strong and comprehensive nuclear weapons treaty is clearly visible.

We do not underestimate the difficulties that will be encountered en route and cannot predict exactly when we will get there, as there will be many political, technical, verification and implementation challenges. Commitment and confidence in our ability to get to the nuclear-weapon-free destination before night falls again are essential. Making a start on the preparatory work for a Nuclear Weapons Convention will mean courageous governments, elected representatives and citizens taking individual and collective initiatives that will hasten the journey and clear the obstacles from the path.

Early steps will include removing nuclear reliance from deterrence doctrines and taking steps to universalize the legal recognition that any use of nuclear weapons would violate international law. Our route, timing and even humanity's survival will depend on whether we can commit and resource ourselves for this journey now. This NPT Review Conference needs to agree on the treaty destination and set in motion the preparatory process and plans to get there as quickly as humanly possible. ■

This speech was drafted by Dr. Rebecca Johnson (vice-chair of ICAN and executive director of the Acronym Institute for Disarmament Diplomacy) and John Loretz (program director of International Physicians for the Prevention of Nuclear War), with input from Juergen Scheffran, Peter Weiss, John Burroughs (International Association of Lawyers Against Nuclear Arms), Regina Hagen (International Network of Engineers and Scientists Against Proliferation), and Alice Slater (Nuclear Age Peace Foundation). It was delivered on Friday, May 7, as an NGO statement. Other statements were also delivered on a variety of topics and are available on the Reaching Critical Will website (www.reachingcriticalwill.org.)

RESOURCE

Ten arguments for a Nuclear Weapons Convention

1 The incremental approach to nuclear disarmament has proven inadequate

It is time to move beyond nuclear arms control and begin a process for nuclear abolition. For the last four decades, the Non-Proliferation Treaty has helped to prevent the uncontrolled spread of nuclear weapons, but governments will need to negotiate a complementary legal framework in order to reach zero nuclear weapons. The continuing threat of nuclear proliferation is closely linked to the failure of the nuclear-weapon states to live up to their obligation under Article VI of the NPT to achieve nuclear disarmament. A Nuclear Weapons Convention would build on the NPT by establishing the mechanisms needed to bring about the complete elimination of nuclear weapons under effective international control.

2 A Nuclear Weapons Convention would help to implement Article VI

Article VI of the NPT requires states parties to pursue negotiations in good faith for nuclear disarmament. The negotiation of a Nuclear Weapons Convention is the most obvious and realistic way for states to fulfil this obligation. A convention would strengthen the NPT in the same way that treaties such as the Comprehensive Test Ban Treaty has also strengthened it. It would be an enabler, not a diversion, in the quest to implement the NPT. If the NPT is regarded as the cornerstone of the nuclear non-proliferation regime, a Nuclear Weapons Convention would be the capstone that allows the full realization of the NPT's core promise: a nuclear-weapon-free world.

3 There is overwhelming support for a Nuclear Weapons Convention

In 2009, 124 states voted in favour of a United Nations General Assembly resolution calling for the immediate commencement of negotiations leading to a Nuclear Weapons Convention. The UN Secretary-General has included the consideration of a convention or a framework of agreements as the first point in his five-point nuclear disarmament action plan. Most civil society organizations working on nuclear disarmament have adopted the convention as one of their primary objectives, and opinion polls in 21 countries show that, on average, 76% of people globally support the abolition of nuclear weapons through a comprehensive verifiable treaty.

4 There is a legal obligation to negotiate and achieve nuclear abolition

In 1996, the International Court of Justice affirmed that all states, including those outside the NPT, have a legal obligation to pursue negotiations for nuclear disarmament and to achieve the complete elimination of nuclear weapons. Like any legal obligation, it must be fulfilled within a reasonable time, and cannot be postponed indefinitely. Moreover, the court held that nuclear disarmament must occur under strict and effective international control, and it de-linked the Article VI nuclear disarmament obligation from the objective of comprehensive demilitarization, meaning that achievement of the former need not await the latter.

5 A convention would bridge the disarmament–non-proliferation divide

In recent years, debate in multilateral forums on nuclear weapons issues have been characterized by a divide between those states which advocate strongly for measures to prevent the further proliferation of nuclear weapons, and those which call for concrete action on nuclear disarmament. The result has been what former UN Secretary-General Kofi Annan referred to as "mutually assured paralysis". The process of negotiating a Nuclear Weapons Convention would help to bridge this rift by addressing both non-proliferation and disarmament simultaneously. It does so by adopting an abolition approach.

6 A convention would facilitate the engagement of states outside the NPT

The general obligations contained in a Nuclear Weapons Convention would apply equally to all parties. In this respect, it would differ from the NPT, which establishes different standards for the five states that tested nuclear weapons before 1967. The convention approach would allow the engagement of the states currently outside the NPT. India, Pakistan and North Korea have all expressed support for a Nuclear Weapons Convention in the UN General Assembly. The common approach of calling for the immediate accession of these states to the NPT as non-nuclear-weapon states is far less likely to result in their actual engagement.

7 A convention is compatible with the advancement of intermediate steps

The pursuit of a Nuclear Weapons Convention would be consistent with the continued promotion of intermediate steps for nuclear disarmament, such as the entry into force of the Comprehensive Test Ban Treaty, the negotiation of a fissile materials treaty, and the conclusion of further bilateral arms reduction treaties between the United States and Russia. A convention would complement these goals, rather than supersede them, as negotiations could take place simultaneously. In other words, the attainment of intermediate steps should not been seen as a precondition for the commencement of negotiations on a convention. Nor should states choose to abandon these efforts in favour of a convention approach.

8 A Nuclear Weapons Convention would help to build trust among nations

A Nuclear Weapons Convention would promote greater accountability in the disarmament process by establishing the systems needed to verify the complete elimination of nuclear weapons. An international monitoring system would be put in place to ensure compliance through declarations from states, routine and surprise inspections, on-site sensors, satellite photography, radionuclide sampling and citizen reporting. In addition, a dedicated agency would be responsible for promoting implementation of the convention. Its objectives would include the containment and surveillance of all materials, equipment and facilities that could contribute to the development or maintenance of nuclear weapons.

9 Conventions have been negotiated to outlaw other categories of weapons

Comprehensive treaties have been negotiated to outlaw other entire categories of weapons, from biological and chemical arms to anti-personnel landmines and cluster munitions. Nuclear weapons are the only "weapons of mass destruction" that have not yet been banned, despite the fact that their destructive potential is greater than that of any other weapon. Non-government organizations recognize that the negotiation of a Nuclear Weapons Convention will likely be a very difficult process, and could take a number of years. But a convention is possible, necessary and increasingly urgent. There is nothing to prevent exploratory work from commencing now, with or without the support of the nuclear-weapon States.

10 The political climate is right to pursue an abolition treaty now

In recent years, the leaders from many of the nuclear-armed states — including the United States and Russia, which between them possess 96% of all nuclear weapons — have expressed support for the vision of a nuclear-weapon-free world. However, without a clear roadmap to zero, this "vision" is unlikely to be realized in the foreseeable future, if at all. Governments must seize the historic opportunity to advance nuclear disarmament by agreeing to begin work now on a legally binding, irreversible and verifiable Nuclear Weapons Convention banning and eliminating all nuclear weapons.

Medical students from Europe at the May 2 rally in New York City for nuclear abolition.

SPEECH

From nuclear-free zones to zero nuclear weapons

Tim Wright

Regional nuclear-weapon-free zones have played an important role in strengthening the global norm against the possession and acquisition of nuclear weapons. It's important to note, however, the fairly woeful record of the nuclear-weapon states in ratifying the protocols to these treaties, especially when compared with the record of ratification by the states which make up the zones.

As a campaigner, I should also emphasize the importance of unofficial nuclear-weapon-free zones — declared by city councils, schools, hospitals and individual landowners — as valuable expressions of public opposition to nuclear weapons and support for their abolition. The War Resisters' League will declare Grand Central here in New York a nuclear-weapon-free zone on Monday, and they expect that some of the demonstrators will be arrested. These kinds of courageous actions, when replicated in dozens of places and over time, are the stuff of real change.

The topic for this forum is "From Nuclear-Weapon-Free Zones to a Nuclear-Weapon-Free World". In other words, how do we go from zones to zero? The most obvious path would be to negotiate a Nuclear Weapons Convention. This is also, in ICAN's view, the most realistic path, and yet it's mainly the "realists" who are holding things up. I'm sure we all recognise that the term "realist" is a misnomer.

A Nuclear Weapons Convention would seek to universalize the prohibition on the use, testing, production and possession of nuclear weapons, and establish a timeframe for their phased elimination. In this context, nuclear-weapon-free zones should be seen, not as a solution to the problem *per se*, but as a means for advancing the goal of nuclear abolition under strict and effective international control.

We all know that, so long as nuclear weapons exist, no country can be totally immune from their deadly consequences, whether or not they are protected by the negative security assurances of a nuclear-weapon-free zone treaty, and whether or not they are the likely target of an actual attack. The problem is that, unlike the laws of treaties, radiation doesn't recognize national boundaries.

> "How do we go from zones to zero? The most obvious path would be to negotiate a Nuclear Weapons Convention."

It should come as no surprise that most of the states which are part of regional nuclear-weapon-free zones have supported the idea of a Nuclear Weapons Convention in the UN General Assembly. Conversely, it's those states which are outside the nuclear-weapon-free zones that have shown the greatest resistance.

But a shift in the position of some nations at this year's NPT Review Conference isn't out of the question. ICAN's strategy going into this conference has been to lobby politicians and government officials in capital cities, as well as diplomats here in New York and in Geneva, in an effort to increase the number of governments advocating for a Nuclear Weapons Convention, and also to achieve a greater diversity of countries doing so.

An important issue worth discussing is how to stop a single nation, such as France or Russia, from refusing to accept an otherwise consensus decision at the Review Conference to pursue preparatory work on a convention. We need to create the conditions in which it would be politically dangerous for any one state to play an obstructionist role such as this.

At last year's NPT Preparatory Committee session, it was all too easy for the Nuclear Weapons Convention to be removed from the chair's draft recommendations, as only a handful of countries had called for it. It was mainly civil society that noticed it had been deleted. That must change.

We must build the pressure at this Review Conference for an approach that looks beyond first steps, whether it's universalization of the nuclear-weapon-free zone treaties including their protocols, entry into force of the Comprehensive Test Ban Treaty, or the negotiation of a fissile materials treaty.

That isn't to say that these endeavours are unimportant, or should be sidelined. But they must occur within the context of a larger effort to outlaw and eliminate nuclear weapons through a comprehensive convention. It is time to move from zones to zero. ■

This speech was delivered at the civil society forum on nuclear-weapon-free zones at the United Nations on April 30.

ARTICLE

How a Nuclear Weapons Convention would work

Tim Wright

The Non-Proliferation Treaty is generally considered to be the cornerstone of the current non-proliferation regime, and Article VI of the treaty contains an obligation on states parties to pursue in good faith negotiations for nuclear disarmament. In 1996 the International Court of Justice, in its advisory opinion on the Legality of the Threat or Use of Nuclear Weapons, affirmed that all states are required to bring such negotiations to a conclusion under strict and effective international control.

Each year since the advisory opinion was handed down, roughly two-thirds of all member states of the United Nations have voted in favour of a General Assembly resolution entitled "Follow-Up to the Advisory Opinion of the ICJ on the Legality of the Threat or Use of Nuclear Weapons". This resolution calls on all states immediately to fulfil their obligation under Article VI of the NPT by commencing negotiations leading to an early conclusion of a Nuclear Weapons Convention prohibiting the development, production, testing, deployment, stockpiling, transfer, threat or use of nuclear weapons and providing for their elimination.

The negotiation of a Nuclear Weapons Convention, or a framework of mutually reinforcing agreements, is the first point in the five-point plan announced by UN Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon in 2008.

How it would work

A Nuclear Weapons Convention would establish a comprehensive framework for the complete elimination of nuclear weapons by an agreed date, and ensure that a world free of nuclear weapons is maintained. It would be an effective way of implementing the NPT, by combining non-proliferation measures with disarmament measures. The NPT by itself is not sufficient to achieve a nuclear-weapon-free world, which is why multilateral treaties such as the Comprehensive Test Ban Treaty have been negotiated subsequent to its entry into force. A Nuclear Weapons Convention would help to bring those states currently not parties to the NPT into the negotiating arena.

It would prohibit the development, testing, production, stockpiling, transfer, use and threat of use of nuclear weapons, and prohibit the production of weapons-useable fissile materials and require delivery vehicles to be destroyed or converted to make them incapable of use with nuclear weapons. States parties would be required to declare all nuclear weapons, nuclear material, nuclear facilities and nuclear weapons delivery vehicles in their possession or under their control. They would then be required to destroy their nuclear arsenals according to a series of phases, for example: taking the weapons off high alert status; removing the weapons from deployment; removing the warheads from their delivery vehicles; disabling the warheads by removing and disfiguring the pits; and placing all fissile material under international control.

It is likely that, in the initial phases of implementing the convention, the United States and Russia, which possess approximately 96% of all nuclear weapons in the world, would be required to make the deepest cuts. An international monitoring system would be established to verify compliance with the Nuclear Weapons Convention, for example, through declarations and reports from states, routine inspections, surprise inspections, on-site sensors, satellite photography, radionuclide sampling and citizen reporting. The convention might also contain protections for persons reporting violations, including the right of asylum.

States parties would be required to adopt any necessary legislative measures to implement their obligations under the Nuclear Weapons Convention, and perhaps also create a national authority responsible for implementation. An international agency would be created to ensure that all States implement the convention. Unlike the International Atomic Energy Agency, it would not have the task of promoting nuclear energy. Its primary objectives would include the containment and surveillance of all materials, equipment and facilities that could contribute to the development, production or maintenance of nuclear weapons.

A comprehensive approach

The number of states calling for a Nuclear Weapons Convention has grown significantly in recent years. This is due largely to the dissatisfaction among non-nuclear-weapon states with the rate of progress towards disarmament under the current step-by-step process. Influential commissions such as the Weapons of Mass Destruction Commission in 2006 and the International Commission on Nuclear Non-Proliferation and Disarmament in 2009 have called for a comprehensive approach. Individual steps towards disarmament such as the negotiation of a fissile material treaty or the entry into force of the Comprehensive Test Ban Treaty are unlikely to have any real effect unless they are part of a comprehensive process that seeks to devalue the role of nuclear weapons in security doctrines.

The vast majority of non-government organizations working in the field of

nuclear non-proliferation and disarmament also support negotiations for a Nuclear Weapons Convention. ICAN was initiated in 2007 with the specific purpose of promoting the commencement of negotiations. The general public also overwhelmingly favours a Nuclear Weapons Convention, with opinion polling conducted in 21 countries in 2008 showing that roughly 76% of people globally would be happy for their government to work with other governments in reaching a binding agreement to abolish nuclear weapons according to a timetable.

We have an opportunity to set in motion a process for a Nuclear Weapons Convention now. Progress has already been made on other aspects of the UN Secretary-General's five-point plan, for example, the resumption of bilateral negotiations between the United States and Russia, discussion in the UN Security Council on nuclear disarmament, an agreement to start work on a fissile materials treaty, and entry into force of the African and Central Asian nuclear-weapon-free zones. Now states should begin to focus on heeding the call for a Nuclear Weapons Convention, backed by a strong system of verification.

While some of the nuclear-armed states may not yet be ready to commence actual negotiations on a Nuclear Weapons Convention, this should not prevent these and other states from beginning preparatory work on a convention, such as exploration of the legal, technical, institutional and political elements required to achieve and maintain a nuclear-weapon-free world. States could begin to consider the possible ways to verify a convention and ensure that there will be a sufficient level of confidence in compliance. Such preparatory work would help to pave the way to actual negotiations by building the political commitment for a convention. ■

Statements of support for a convention

"I urge all NPT parties, in particular the nuclear-weapon States, to fulfil their obligation under the treaty to undertake negotiations on effective measures leading to nuclear disarmament. They could pursue this goal by agreement on a framework of separate, mutually reinforcing instruments. Or they could consider negotiating a nuclear weapons convention, backed by a strong system of verification, as has long been proposed at the United Nations."

– UN Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon, 2008

"An important project for the medium term will be to develop, refine and build international understanding and acceptance of the need for a Nuclear Weapons Convention — a comprehensive international legal regime to accompany the final move to elimination … There is no reason why detailed further work on such a convention should not commence now, and with government support."

– Evans–Kawaguchi Commission, 2009

"A nuclear disarmament treaty is achievable and can be reached through careful, sensible and practical measures. Benchmarks should be set, definitions agreed, timetables drawn up and agreed upon, and transparency requirements agreed. Disarmament work should be set in motion."

– Weapons of Mass Destruction Commission, 2006

"Disarmament: … Agree to begin collective preparatory work for negotiations on a convention or framework of instruments for the sustainable, verifiable and enforceable global elimination of nuclear weapons."

– Middle Powers Initiative Recommendations, 2010

RESOURCE

References to a Nuclear Weapons Convention

NPT Review Conference

This is a list of references to a Nuclear Weapons Convention or the UN Secretary-General's five-point plan at the NPT Review Conference. It is not a complete list, as many comments on a convention were made behind closed doors or were not recorded:

Austria

"[Austria] believes that the most effective way to move towards 'global zero' is through a universal legal instrument, a Nuclear Weapons Convention, equipped with a strict multilateral verification mechanism … We were at the forefront of initiatives resulting in conventions banning mines and cluster bombs. The Austrian government and the legislature … will examine closely how disarmament is dealt with at this conference. If there is no clear progress towards 'global zero', we will discuss with partners the feasibility of a global instrument to ban these weapons."

Brazil

"Enhanced verification mechanisms should be devised and grafted into a future Convention on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons, which would level the playing field by making zero nuclear weapons the norm for all members of the international community."

Chile

"We should support the Secretary-General's five-point plan and, in particular, lay the foundations for preliminary discussion of a Convention on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons."

China

"The international community should develop, at an appropriate time, a viable, long-term plan composed of phased actions, including a convention on the complete prohibition of nuclear weapons."

Colombia

"The only way to free ourselves from that threat is to achieve the complete elimination of nuclear arsenals … For this reason we insist in the urgency of [an] international legally binding instrument that prohibits the development, production, stockpiling and use of nuclear weapons."

Costa Rica

"Thirteen years ago Costa Rica and Malaysia presented a draft Framework Convention on Nuclear Weapons … Building on this draft we could create an instrument capable of strengthening confidence in verification and ensure the supervision of processes, dismantling and definitive reduction of the nuclear threat."

Cuba

"Cuba agrees that, as a transcendental outcome of this conference, it will be required the adoption of a clear plan of action to comply with the implementation of all the provisions of the treaty, mainly with the nuclear disarmament obligations. The plan shall establish a concrete schedule for the gradual reduction of nuclear weapons in a transparent, irreversible, verifiable and legally binding manner. We must ratify this plan until the complete elimination of these weapons by 2025."

Egypt

"Egypt calls once again on the nuclear-weapon states to comply fully with their legal obligations under the NPT and to collectively initiate multilateral negotiations on a Nuclear Weapons Convention, as stipulated in Article VI, aimed at banning nuclear weapons and their total elimination in a given timeframe."

Holy See

"[T]he world has arrived at an opportune moment to begin addressing in a systematic way the legal, political and technical requisites for a nuclear-weapon-free world. For this reason, preparatory work should begin as soon as possible on a convention or framework agreement leading to the phased elimination of nuclear weapons."

Indonesia

"[W]e must work intensively together to produce a universal Nuclear Weapons Convention with a specific timeline for the attainment of complete nuclear disarmament. For the eradication of all nuclear weapons is our only assurance that they will never be used."

Iran

"We believe this is the time that once and for all we should set a clear deadline for the total elimination of nuclear weapons, and it would be possible through the negotiation of a Nuclear Weapons Convention. In our view, the Review Conference would not be successful unless it could reach such an agreement."

Kenya

"[I]t is our conviction that there is need to commence early negotiations leading to the conclusion of an international convention for the total elimination of all nuclear weapons."

Lebanon

"Our joint endeavor to stave off any possible nuclear tragedy in the future should be boosted by further strengthening the international legal system in this regard … Let us start negotiations on crucial international instruments such as the Nuclear Weapons Convention and the Fissile Material Cut-Off Treaty."

Liechtenstein

"Liechtenstein supports the long-term goal of a Nuclear Weapons Convention, in line with the Secretary-General's five-point plan. This conference should prepare the ground for such a project by adopting a program of action including concrete goals to be achieved within set timeframes."

Malaysia

"Nuclear-weapon states … should demonstrate leadership by committing themselves to nuclear disarmament via implementation of commitments and undertaking agreed in 1995 and 2000, in a specified period of time culminating in the total elimination of their nuclear weapons, through the conclusion of a Nuclear Weapons Convention."

Mexico

"Mexico expects that as a result of this conference we agree on … the reaffirmation of the unequivocal commitment by the nuclear-weapon states to achieve the destruction of their nuclear arsenals and to negotiate a convention that prohibits these weapons with a timeframe that provides certainty to the international community."

Mongolia

"My delegation believes that the Secretary-General's five-point proposal on nuclear disarmament is a balanced, realistic and promising initiative to which we extend our full support."

Norway

"As the ultimate implementation of Article VI, a nuclear-weapon-free world will need an additional legal instrument. This is a topic which is becoming increasingly relevant and important. We are likely to see more discussions on this matter in time to come."

Qatar

"We stress the importance that the conference adopt the action plan of the states parties to eliminate nuclear weapons, which was presented by the Non-Aligned Movement … We hope that we will not wait long before we celebrate a universal treaty for disarmament and prohibition of nuclear weapons, for this has legal and political importance."

Senegal

"Le renforcement de l'autorité du TNP commande également que cette conférence de revue se prononce sur les voies et moyens d'arriver it une convention générale sur les armes nucléaires, tel que mentionné dans l'article 6 du TNP."

Switzerland

"Ultimately, the question of banning nuclear weapons by a new convention — as proposed by the UN Secretary-General — must be addressed. Switzerland expects the final document of this conference to re-affirm the objective of achieving a world without nuclear weapons, and to encourage the discussion on a convention to ban nuclear weapons."

Thailand

"Thailand supports the UN Secretary-General's five-point proposal on nuclear disarmament."

Tunisia

"Les Etats dotés de l'arme nucléaire sont appelés à entamer des négociations sur un programme graduel d'élimination totale de leurs arsenaux, ce dans le cadre d'une Convention sur les Armes Nucléaires, ce qui es, à notre avis, en concordance avec l'avis consultatif de la Cour Internationale de Justice …"

Yemen

"We urge a ban on the use or threat of use of nuclear weapons, and ultimately their complete elimination."

Inter-Parliamentary Union

"Current barriers to nuclear disarmament could be overcome through commencing a preparatory process which would explore the legal, technical, institutional and political requirements for a nuclear-weapon-free world. This process could be guided, but would not be bound by, the Model Nuclear Weapons Convention circulated by the UN Secretary-General."

Non-Aligned Movement

"The consideration of a Nuclear Weapons Convention banning all nuclear weapons, as mentioned in Article VI of the treaty, should begin and should be an integral part of any plan of action on nuclear disarmament to be adopted by this conference."

Nuclear-free zone states

"We reaffirm the urgent need to advance towards the priority goal of nuclear disarmament and the achievement of the total elimination and legally binding prohibition of nuclear weapons …"

NOTE: Other countries such as Algeria, Libya and the Philippines also spoke in favour of a convention, but their statements are unavailable.

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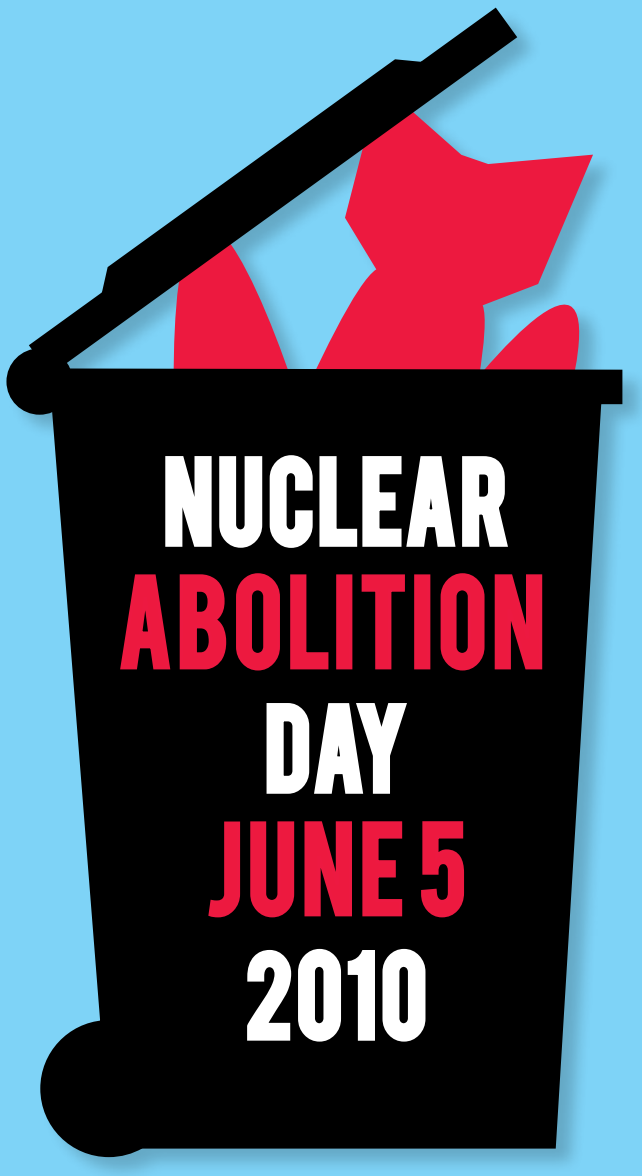
ican
international campaign
to abolish nuclear weapons

On June 5, people around the world will respond to the NPT Review Conference outcome.

Our message is simple: it's time to negotiate a Nuclear Weapons Convention.



On June 5, 2010, thousands of people across the world will take part in coordinated local events to mark Nuclear Abolition Day. Our message is simple: it's time for governments to begin negotiating a Nuclear Weapons Convention to ban all nuclear weapons.

2010年6月5日、世界中で何千人もの人々がそれぞれの地域で核兵器廃絶の日を記念する協調イベントに参加するでしょう。私たちのメッセージはシンプルなものです。つまり、今こそ各国政府が全ての核兵器を禁止する核兵器禁止条約の協議を始める時なのです。

Le 5 juin 2010, des milliers de personnes à travers le monde entier participeront à des événements locaux coordonnés pour marquer la Journée de l'abolition de l'arme nucléaire. Notre message est simple: il est temps pour les gouvernements de commencer la négociation d'une Convention sur les armes nucléaires afin d'interdire toutes les armes nucléaires.

El 5 de junio del 2010, miles de personas alrededor del mundo participarán en eventos locales para conmemorar el Día de la Abolición Nuclear. Nuestro mensaje es muy simple: ha llegado el momento de que los gobiernos comiencen a negociar una Convención sobre Armas Nucleares para prohibir el uso de cualquier arma nuclear.

2010年6月5日，来自世界各地成千上万的人将万众一心，投入到各地的“核废除日”活动之中。我们想传递的信息很简单：敦促各国举办核武器大会，协商废除所有核武！

No dia 5 de Junho de 2010, para destacar o Dia pela Abolição Nuclear milhares de pessoas por todo o mundo vão participar em eventos locais coordenados entre si. A mensagem é simples: É tempo dos governos começarem a negociar uma convenção sobre as armas nucleares que conduza à sua total eliminação.

Am Samstag, den 5. Juni 2010 werden Tausende von Menschen mit weltweit vernetzten Aktionen auf den „Nuclear Abolition Day“ aufmerksam machen. Unsere Botschaft lautet schlicht und einfach: Es ist höchste Zeit, mit den Verhandlungen über eine Nuklearwaffenkonvention zu beginnen und Atomwaffen endlich abzuschaffen.

5 juni 2010 kommer tusentals människor över hela världen att delta i kordinerade, lokala evenemang med syfte att uppmärksamma Nuclear Abolition Day. Meddelandet är tydligt: det är dags för världens regeringar att börja förhandla om en kärnvapenkonvention vilken innebär ett totalförbud av kärnvapen.

5. juni 2010 vil tusener av mennesker over hele verden markere den internasjonale dagen for et forbud mot atomvåpen. Vårt budskap er enkelt: tiden er kommet for at verdens land begynner forhandlinger om en konvensjon som forbyr alle atomvåpen.

Στις 5 Ιουνίου 2010 χιλιάδες άνθρωποι σε όλη τη γη θα λάβουν μέρος σε συντονισμένες τοπικές εκδηλώσεις, που σηματοδοτούν την Ημέρα για την Πυρηνική Εξαφάνιση. Το μήνυμά μας είναι απλό. Είναι επιτέλους καιρός οι κυβερνήσεις να αρχίσουν να διαπραγματεύονται μια Συνθήκη Κατάργησης των Πυρηνικών, έτσι ώστε να εξαλειφθούν όλα τα πυρηνικά από τον πλανήτη μας.

Il 5 Giugno 2010, migliaia di persone in tutto il mondo prenderanno parte una serie di eventi locali coordinati per celebrare il Giorno dell'Abolizione delle Armi Nucleari. Il nostro messaggio è semplice: è arrivato il momento per i governi di iniziare a negoziare una Convenzione sulle Armi Nucleari per mettere al bando tutte le armi nucleari.

Sa ika-5 ng Hunyo 2010, libo-libong mamamayan sa iba't-ibang panig ng mundo ay magkaka-isa at makikilahok sa pagdiriwang ng Nuclear Abolition Day. Ang aming mensahe ay simple lamang: Panahon na para simulan ng mga pamahalaan ang pakikipag-usap tunkol sa Nuclear Weapons Convention upang ipagbawal na ang mga armas nukleyar sa mundo.

Kesäkuun viidentenä 2010 osallistuvat tuhannet ihmiset ympäri maailmaa paikallisiin tilaisuuksiin viettämään ydinaseiden poistamisen päivää. Viestimme on yksinkertainen: hallitusten on aika aloittaa neuvottelut ydinaseet kieltävän sopimuksen aikaansaamiseksi, jotta nämä aseet saadaan hävitetyksi.

nuclearabolition.org