

NUCLEAR BAN DAILY

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Reaching Critical Will



WILPF
WOMEN'S INTERNATIONAL
LEAGUE FOR PEACE & FREEDOM

Editorial: Dismantle, Change, Build

Ray Acheson | Reaching Critical Will, Women's International League for Peace and Freedom

Throughout the general exchange of views at the TPNW Second Meeting of States Parties (2MSP) on Tuesday and Wednesday, participants lamented the multitude of horrifying developments in international relations and so-called geopolitics that have yet again forced the world to contemplate the possible use of nuclear weapons, and even nuclear war. “The hopeful eye to the future—to a world without these weapons of mass destruction—is set against the dark veil of unbearable suffering,” **said** Trinidad and Tobago. “Several decades after the world had crossed a new threshold of horror and witnessed the first ever use of the atomic bomb, we are obliged to ask ourselves today, whether we have learnt from the past.”

As has been made clear by the lack of participation in 2MSP by nuclear-armed states and most of their nuclear client states, and by the comments from the few nuclear weapon supporters that are participating in this meeting, such as **Germany** and **Norway**, those who love the bomb have not learned anything from the past. Germany, delivering a **more aggressive statement** than it did to 1MSP, said that due to Russia's war in Ukraine it is more committed than ever to the practice and policy of nuclear deterrence—as if building up for nuclear war has ever done anything other than exacerbate the risk of nuclear war. Norway similarly said it “fully stands behind” the North Atlantic Treaty Organization's doctrine and posture, including its nuclear sharing arrangements.

The remarks by these governments prompted Equatorial Guinea to ask if some states are at the wrong meeting, noting that they are articulating positions contrary to the TPNW. Despite these interventions, however, the rest of the general exchange offered helpful insights into universalisation efforts—including updates from several governments that are working to become states parties, such as Indonesia and Mozambique's announcements that they are nearly finished their ratification processes—and into the direction of implementation of many of the Treaty's provisions. As Austria **said**, “While practically all vectors on nuclear weapons point in the wrong direction, the TPNW is the one international development that shows the way out of the nuclear weapons paradigm: the stigmatization and prohibition of these most indiscriminate and unacceptable weapons based on the understanding of their catastrophic humanitarian consequences and risks.” Egypt, an observer state, similarly **described** the TPNW as a “ray of light” when other initiatives, such as gradual incremental roadmaps and risk reduction measures, are failing to achieve progress.

Key to advancing the TPNW's stigmatisation of nuclear weapons is the critique of nuclear deterrence policies and practices. Nuclear deterrence, as explained in the **previous editorial**, perpetuates mass violence whether or not nuclear weapons are detonated. In this spirit, Jamaica urged further efforts from TPNW states parties to “continue to dispel the notion that the possession of nuclear weapons represents power, status, deterrence and an instrument of national security,” while Sri Lanka underscored the delusions inherent in such beliefs, which spark “a chain reaction in enticing those who do not have nuclear weapons to develop an appetite to acquiring them and for those who have nuclear weapons to continue developing and stockpiling them.”

As Brazil **said**, recent events around the world have exposed these and other contradictions of nuclear deterrence doctrines:

Nuclear sharing by one side cannot be fought with nuclear sharing by another. ICBM launches cannot be counteracted by nuclear-armed submarines and bombers visiting non-nuclear states. Quantitative increases in warheads do not excuse qualitative improvements in warheads.

Proliferation of missiles is not the answer to missile defense, nor is missile defense the answer to missile proliferation.

Brazil noted these actions are both morally wrong and strategically wrong, “as they reinforce security dilemmas, heightening risks for all without making any country safer.” It is crucial to continue to articulate and amplify the absurdity of basing security policies and strategies on the possession, development, deployment, and use of weapons of mass destruction.

TPNW states parties have an opportunity to advance this work in a concrete way by supporting the Austrian **proposal** for the intersessional period between the second and third Meetings of State Parties to be used to develop a comprehensive set of arguments and recommendations against narratives related to nuclear deterrence.

Further, as the South African delegation **pointed out**, the 2MSP declaration should send a strong message of rejection of nuclear deterrence doctrines, policies, and practices, and all of the developments that are related to maintaining deterrence such as the modernisation of nuclear weapons, spending on nuclear forces, and nuclear sharing and deployments. In addition, “The prevalence and negative impact of nuclear weapons on global relations, and the lack of progress on nuclear disarmament which increases the systemic risk of nuclear conflict, have to be addressed,” urged South Africa.

As participants of 2MSP now move into the stage of work reviewing the implementation of the TPNW’s various articles and the reports of its working groups and other entities advancing the achievement of the Treaty’s goals, we can take heart that the bold aspirations of the Treaty’s negotiators are coming to fruition due to hard work over the intersessional period since 1MSP. The violence being waged globally by nuclear-armed states does not determine the outcomes of this meeting, nor does it limit the ambition of its states parties or the activists, affected communities, and academics working to advance its goals. As **affected communities proclaimed in a joint statement**, “With the next generations, there is not only hope but also an assurance of continued advocacy for justice, as long as nuclear colonialism is not ended, and justice is not granted to our communities.”

War is the backdrop of all our work, and, as Costa Rica **said**, war is “the inevitable outcome of male power structures, sustained by military-industrial apparatuses, with global ramifications.” The TPNW rejects these structures of war, seeking to abolish not just nuclear bombs but also the ideologies and infrastructure that sustain them. At the same time, the Action Plan adopted at 1MSP and the TPNW’s working groups facilitate the construction of alternative ideologies and infrastructure for peace and justice, achieved through diplomacy, negotiation, and solidarity. For **abolitionist movements** confronting a range of structures of state violence, the approach of “dismantle, change, build” guides the work to both deconstruct and reconstruct a world that works for all.

“A milestone of multilateralism, the TPNW is not only the most direct way to rid ourselves of the existential threat posed by nuclear weapons,” explained Costa Rica. “It also charts the course for a better coexistence among states and for the resolution of the most pressing challenges facing humanity today.... And now that the TPNW is here, now that we finally have an international legal instrument for abolishing all nuclear weapons, we must do the work to make sure that international law is the ongoing expression of our will, not the conclusion of our efforts.”

Report on the General Exchange of Views

Laura Varella and Ray Acheson | Reaching Critical Will of WILPF

On 28 and 29 November, delegations engaged in a general exchange of views. This report provides highlights from the discussion and is not a comprehensive accounting of all views expressed.

Worrying trends and the role of the TPNW

Several delegations, including Aotearoa New Zealand, Austria, Bangladesh, Congo, Costa Rica, Egypt, Guatemala, Guyana, Haiti, Honduras, Indonesia, Jamaica, Lao People's Democratic Republic (Lao PDR), Malaysia, Malta, Morocco, Mozambique, Namibia, Nepal, Palestine, Paraguay, Peru, Philippines, Samoa, Sierra Leone, South Africa, Sri Lanka, Switzerland, Thailand, Trinidad and Tobago, Uruguay, and Viet Nam warned that the world faces a series of worrying trends, including the worsening international security context, rising tensions amongst nuclear-armed states, increasing nuclear arms race dynamics, nuclear threats, increased nuclear risk, violations or revocations of disarmament and arms control agreements, rising nuclear weapon spending and modernisation, and increased salience of nuclear weapons in security doctrines.

Bangladesh, Bolivia, Ecuador, Guatemala, Jamaica, Nepal, Nicaragua, and Trinidad and Tobago argued that resources spent on nuclear weapon modernisation and expansion could otherwise be better used to protect the planet and people, address climate change and poverty, guarantee peace, and prevent conflicts. Viet Nam said rising investments in nuclear arsenals brings about more mistrust among nuclear-armed states.

The Philippines emphasised the importance of addressing the implications of emerging technologies in the nuclear domain. El Salvador and Honduras made similar remarks, stating that the applications of artificial intelligence to nuclear deterrence and security doctrines represents risks that may increase the possibility of unintended use. Honduras underlined the recommendations of experts that all command and control decisions related to nuclear weapons must always take into account a human-centred approach.

In this context, Austria highlighted the importance of the TPNW, especially considering two failed Non-Proliferation Treaty (NPT) review cycles and the reversal of progress for the entry into force of the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty (CTBT). Similarly, Aotearoa New Zealand said that the TPNW is one of the few bright spots in the effort towards nuclear disarmament, and the Philippines stressed the universalisation of the Treaty has never been more pressing. Brazil said it was encouraged by the fact that membership in the TPNW has continued to grow at a time when other aspects of the disarmament and non-proliferation regime are struggling to make advances or even hold together.

Nuclear deterrence

Several delegations questioned nuclear deterrence theory and/or its role in military doctrines of nuclear-armed states, including Austria, Bangladesh, Brazil, Chile, El Salvador, Guyana, Jamaica, Kiribati, Malta, Nepal, San Marino, South Africa, Sri Lanka, and Uruguay.

Austria stated that states parties and signatories of the TPNW are united against a security approach that is based on the threat of global mass destruction, humanitarian catastrophe, and profound environmental damage, adding that this approach is “not only morally unacceptable but a high risk gamble with the security of all humanity.” Jamaica urged states to “continue to dispel the notion that

the possession of nuclear weapons represents power, status, deterrence and an instrument of national security.”

South Africa stated that “the increased emphasis on nuclear weapons in the military and security doctrines of some States’ security is incompatible with the consolidation of the non-proliferation regime and does not contribute to the strengthening of international security for all.” Similarly, El Salvador said, “We cannot continue to base the security of a minority on the insecurity of the majority.”

Malta questioned, “How can one feel secure, when nuclear weapons pose a threat of indiscriminate mass destruction and are incompatible with respect for the right to life?”

Kiribati urged all countries and peoples “to do away with the old colonial and false doctrine that possession of a nuclear weapon is the only sure guarantee of lasting peace among nations,” and added that joining the TPNW “is a necessary stepping stone to the total rejection of the nuclear deterrence doctrine and the full adoption of the multilateral peace building mechanisms of the United Nations.”

Sri Lanka welcomed the Working Paper submitted by Austria proposing that the inter-sessional period between the 2nd and 3rd Meetings of State Parties be used to develop a comprehensive set of arguments and recommendations against narratives related to nuclear deterrence, adding, “One cannot condone any response to a potential threat of national security on the basis of a threat of mass destruction of humanity as a whole.”

In contrast, observer state Germany said that “the importance of nuclear deterrence has increased for many states,” including for Germany, which as a North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) member “is fully committed to NATO’s nuclear deterrence, the purpose of which is to preserve peace, deter aggression and prevent nuclear coercion.” Belgium and Norway also said they support NATO’s nuclear deterrence posture.

Nuclear weapon deployment, threat, and sharing

South Africa said states need to confront the deployment of nuclear weapons in the territories of non-nuclear-armed states and the training of allied armed forces in their use. Brazil also opposed these arrangements, saying, “Nuclear sharing by one side cannot be fought with nuclear sharing by another. ICBM launches cannot be counteracted by nuclear-armed submarines and bombers visiting non-nuclear states.” Trinidad and Tobago also expressed concern about the deployment of nuclear weapons on the territory of other states and said that nuclear sharing arrangements are incompatible with Article 1 of the TPNW and contrary to the object and purpose of the NPT.

Venezuela said the Australia-United Kingdom-United States (AUKUS) nuclear-powered submarine agreement violates the international non-proliferation regime, including the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) Comprehensive Safeguards Agreements.

Palestine called on Israel to end its occupation of Palestine, noting that the Israeli military has been relentlessly bombing Gaza, using internationally prohibited weapons, and threatening to use nuclear weapons. In this context, Palestine also called on Israel to abandon its nuclear weapon programme and cease its boycott of the conferences to establish a weapon of mass destruction free zone in the Middle East. Cook Islands, Egypt, Sri Lanka, and Venezuela also criticised Israel’s war against Gaza and its threats to use nuclear weapons. Egypt said that “this an outrageous and shocking statement that requires solemn condemnation and firm action including by this august assembly.”

A few countries criticised Russia's threats to use nuclear weapons in the context of its aggression against Ukraine, and/or its announcement that it will station nuclear weapons in Belarus. Germany said that "international arms control fora, including this Meeting of States' Parties, need to be explicit and call out Russia as a major obstacle to disarmament efforts."

Virtually all participants condemned all threats to use nuclear weapons, regardless of circumstance.

Humanitarian impact of nuclear weapons

Aotearoa New Zealand, Austria, Bangladesh, Brazil, Burkina Faso, Botswana, Cabo Verde, Chile, Comoros, Congo, Costa Rica, Côte d'Ivoire, Dominican Republic, Ecuador, Egypt, El Salvador, Guatemala, Guyana, Holy See, Ireland, Jamaica, Lesotho, Malta, Mexico, Namibia, Nauru, Nepal, Nigeria, Norway, Palestine, Paraguay, Peru, Philippines, San Marino, South Africa, Sri Lanka, Switzerland, Venezuela, and Uruguay, among others, emphasised the catastrophic humanitarian consequences of nuclear weapons, with some underscoring new evidence on the topic.

Austria highlighted that new research about the risks associated with nuclear weapons shows that they are more complex and multifaceted than previously known. It stressed "that the assumed security benefits of nuclear weapons and nuclear deterrence do not hold up against this new evidence and that a collective paradigm shift away from nuclear weapons is urgently needed."

Chile stressed that the catastrophic consequences of nuclear weapons cannot be addressed only by the states involved, as it is clear these impacts can transcend national borders, posing serious implications for human survival and health; the environment; economic and social development; food security and the health of current and future generations. Jamaica urged expanding the conversation "beyond the humanitarian, environmental, and security dimension of the impact of nuclear weapons to include additional focus on issues of social justice and the economic imperatives of nuclear disarmament."

A few delegations, including Chile, El Salvador, and the Holy See, underlined the compelling scientific evidence pointing to the disproportionate impact of ionising radiation on women and children. Chile highlighted that the TPNW is the only gender-sensitive nuclear weapons agreement that recognises this impact and addresses the importance of women's participation in nuclear disarmament. El Salvador and others also highlighted the importance of studies that have simulated a nuclear winter, demonstrating the impact of these weapons on the environment.

The Holy See acknowledged the presence of the Hibakusha at the 2MSP, as well as other victims of the use and testing of nuclear weapons. Nauru highlighted its direct experience of nuclear testing by colonial powers and the resulting humanitarian impacts. It noted that these harms persist today as a reminder of the urgency of the collective task for nuclear disarmament.

Norway said that work to draw attention to humanitarian impacts "moves the focus from the strategic domain to the catastrophic consequences that any use of nuclear weapons would entail for people and the environment. Survivors of Hiroshima and Nagasaki, and people living in the vicinity of the test sites, can testify to this."

Mayors for Peace underlined that learning about the effects that nuclear weapons had on human beings is not only a starting point towards a world without nuclear weapons, but also a driving force to change the world. The Japan Council against Atomic and Hydrogen Bombs highlighted the physical and psychological trauma experienced by people from Hiroshima and Nagasaki until this day, saying that the testimony of survivors have served as a driving force towards abolition of nuclear weapons. Know Nukes Tokyo also highlighted the testimony of survivors and asked states to work towards universalisation

of the Treaty, including by requesting the participation of Japan and other “umbrella states.” In a joint statement, affected communities noted:

Our lives, our lands, our waters, and our communities were permanently changed by the development, testing and use of nuclear weapons.... Nuclear weapons do harm every day. From the mining of uranium to the creation of the bomb and the everlasting radioactive waste, our planet carries the scars of so many nuclear sacrifice zones. Nuclear colonialism has disproportionately impacted Indigenous Peoples and marginalised communities. Indigenous Peoples lands were taken. Bodies were used, people were bombed.

Universalisation

Austria, Chile, Comoros, Côte d'Ivoire, Honduras, Indonesia, Ireland, Kiribati, Lao PDR, Lesotho, Mexico, Philippines, San Marino, Sierra Leone, South Africa, Viet Nam, and the ICRC stressed that the universalisation of the TPNW will be an important aspect to move forward in implementing the Treaty.

Brazil highlighted the significant pace of universalisation of the TPNW, noting that the pace of ratification is comparable to the NPT and that this is impressive given that it has continued during a pandemic and while other disarmament and arms control instruments are struggling. Egypt made similar remarks and urged nuclear-armed and supporting states to positively engage with the Treaty.

South Africa, which is one of the co-chairs of the working group on universalisation, reiterated that universalisation “not only comprises increasing signatures and ratifications, but perhaps more importantly promotes the underlying rationale of the total elimination of nuclear weapons due to their inherent risks and catastrophic humanitarian consequences. This understanding could trigger changes to nuclear disarmament especially in the policies of nuclear armed States and umbrella States.” Kiribati made similar remarks.

Many delegations, including Aotearoa New Zealand, Austria, Bangladesh, Botswana, Cabo Verde, Ecuador, Guatemala, Guyana, Jamaica, Lao PDR, Malta, Mexico, Mozambique, Namibia, Nigeria, Philippines, Viet Nam, and the ICRC, welcomed the states that have signed, ratified, and acceded to the TPNW since the First Meeting of States Parties.

Some governments gave updates on their progress toward joining the Treaty. Mozambique said its government approved ratification on 19 September 2023 and endorsed a resolution ratifying the treaty to the Assembly of the Republic. It said this is the final step in its ratification process and it should soon become a state party. Indonesia announced that its parliament has just approved ratification and it will soon become a state party. Sri Lanka said it will accede to the TPNW soon, having deposited its instrument of ratification on 19 September 2023.

Brazil reiterated its hope that its Congress will soon approve ratification of the TPNW. Nepal said it is determined to ratify the TPNW at the earliest opportunity. Myanmar reaffirmed its commitment to become a state party to TPNW in the near future.

Haiti said it signed the TPNW a year ago. Burkina Faso said that while it has yet to become a state party it strongly believes in the objectives and spirit of the TPNW.

Belgium, Germany, and Norway said they will not sign or ratify the TPNW because it contradicts their national security interests and their commitments within the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO). Germany reiterated that as a non-state party it is “not bound by its provisions, nor do we accept the claim that its provisions are applicable under customary law—neither now nor in the future.”

Switzerland said that in 2018 and 2019, it decided that it would not join the TPNW for the time being, explaining:

This decision is based on an expert report that is available publicly and indicated that it would be reviewed in due course. Since then, the government has initiated a new evaluation of the matter as well as an additional report on the security policy consequences of a possible accession to the TPNW in view of Russia's military aggression against Ukraine, which was prompted by the Swiss Parliament in 2022. The Swiss government is expected to address the matter in due course.

Switzerland also noted that "the results of this Conference and the implementation of the TPNW can inform our evaluation related to a possible adhesion to this instrument."

Egypt, participating as an observer for the first time, said it is keen to stay informed about the deliberations and outcomes and noted that the Treaty is "a ray of light at a time, where once again, the approach of nuclear disarmament through gradual incremental roadmaps and risk reduction measures is proving to be furthest from productivity and concrete progress."

A handful of delegations, including Aotearoa New Zealand, Bangladesh, Chile, Ireland, and Mexico, acknowledged or welcomed the observer states participating this week.

Bangladesh, Burkina Faso, Cambodia, Chile, Cook Islands, Comoros, Congo, Dominican Republic, Ecuador, Guyana, Indonesia, Lao PDR, Malta, Mexico, Mongolia, Myanmar, Nauru, Nepal, Palestine, Samoa, San Marino, Sri Lanka, Tanzania, Trinidad and Tobago, Viet Nam, among others, urged all states which have not yet done so to join the TPNW.

Many states highlighted measures they have undertaken to support the TPNW's universalisation in other forums, such as by supporting the UN General Assembly resolution on the TPNW in the First Committee.

Implementation

Several delegations welcomed the work done during the intersession period to implement the TPNW and the Vienna Action Plan, adopted by the First Meeting of States Parties.

Aotearoa New Zealand, Austria, Bolivia, Chile, Costa Rica, Honduras, Lao PDR, Mexico, Nauru, Palestine, San Marino, Thailand, and others welcomed the work of the informal working groups on universalization, on article 4, on victim assistance and environmental remediation, on complementarity, and/or on gender perspectives. Observer states Egypt, Marshall Islands, and Switzerland said they are following the work of these groups.

Cabo Verde, Indonesia, Mexico, Nauru, Samoa, Sri Lanka, and many others welcomed the discussions on victim assistance and environmental remediation, particularly in regard to mechanisms to define the structure of an Environmental Remediation Fund for affected states, as well as to explore mechanisms to facilitate the submission of voluntary reports on the implementation of articles 6 and 7. Samoa noted that many Pacific states have suffered and continue to suffer transboundary and intergenerational effects left from nuclear weapon testing and radioactive contamination. It endorsed the recommendations in the report of the Articles 6 and 7 working group and called for negotiations on the trust fund with the goal of adopting guidelines at 3MSP.

Ireland recalled that the TPNW obliges states parties to assist survivors of nuclear weapons testing or use in areas under their jurisdiction, and to undertake necessary environmental remediation in areas under their control. Côte d'Ivoire and Comoros also expressed support for the continuation of this work.

Germany reiterated that it is committed to explore how to support work in this area and said it intends to support concrete project work such as support for international cooperation and workshops on victim assistance and environmental remediation, statistical research on the effects of nuclear testing, feminist perspectives on victims assistance as well as further research on the effects of radiation on women and girls. Switzerland urged that efforts on victim assistance and environmental rehabilitation be “framed in a such way that they can be broadly supported, if the intention is that they can also be taken forward in the NPT.”

The affected communities joint statement called on all states to do everything in their conscious power to implement Articles 6 and 7. The Group also called for the clean-up of contaminated lands and waters and for “assistance for victims and survivors, whether we are Indigenous Peoples, hibakusha, hibakunisei, nuclear veterans, test survivors, downwinders, or anyone whose lives are scarred by the intergenerational harms caused by the development and production of these weapons of mass destruction.”

The Steppe Organization for Peace, also on behalf of Comitato Senzatomica, supported the work being done on victim assistance, and asked states to commit to the inclusion of youth, to elevate voices of women, and to expand efforts to universalize the TPNW together with civil society and others. Reverse the Trend also stressed the importance of youth participation, particularly highlighting the voices of girls from affected communities in Kiribati.

Mexico and Uruguay welcomed the work done by Chile as the gender focal point. Several other delegations also expressed support for the integration of gender perspectives and participation of women in disarmament and non-proliferation fora.

Aotearoa New Zealand, Austria, Bolivia, Costa Rica, Ireland, Jamaica, Malta, Mexico, Mongolia, Palestine, San Marino, and Switzerland commended the members of the Scientific Advisory Group (SAG) for their engagement and their substantive reports. Nepal said scientific and technical expertise is crucial, including for developing an effective verification mechanism and monitoring system.

Complementarity of the TPNW and other instruments

Several delegations, including Bolivia, Botswana, Brazil, Chile, Comoros, Côte d'Ivoire, Ecuador, Egypt, El Salvador, Guatemala, Ireland, Lao PDR, Lesotho, Malaysia, Mexico, Palestine, Paraguay, Samoa, Thailand, Trinidad and Tobago, and Viet Nam, stressed that the TPNW is compatible and complements or reinforces other legally binding instruments, such as the NPT, the CTBT, and nuclear weapon free zone treaties.

Germany said it was encouraged that during the Tenth NPT Review Conference, members of the TPNW declared their support for the NPT, and that during this year's NPT Working Group on Strengthening the Review Process, TPNW members advanced measures for transparency and accountability. Switzerland expressed regret that the Tenth NPT Review Conference “was unable to address the relationship between the NPT and the TPNW.”

Philippines supported enhanced collaboration with existing safeguards and verification mechanisms, ensuring that all state parties adhere to NPT commitments.

Implementing Articles 6 and 7

Bonnie Docherty | Harvard Law School's International Human Rights Clinic

The TPNW includes strong victim assistance, environmental remediation, and international cooperation and assistance obligations, and the Vienna Action Plan establishes a framework to begin implementation. Now it is time for states parties to put these words into action.

Important work was done in the area over the past intersessional period. Working group co-chairs and affected states Kazakhstan and Kiribati spearheaded constructive and inclusive discussions. The 2MSP should now approve two key decisions on Articles 6 and 7 consistent with the co-chairs' report.

First, the 2MSP should adopt and recommend the voluntary use of the reporting guidelines and format proposed in the **co-chairs' report**. Allowing for refinement of the guidelines and format over time also makes sense.

This decision would be a concrete step toward advancing implementation of Articles 6 and 7. Reporting on victims' needs, environmental contamination, and progress in responding allows for monitoring and accountability, and in turn encourages action. Reporting allows for the exchange of information, which can improve victim assistance and environmental remediation measures. It also illuminates affected states parties' needs, facilitating international cooperation and assistance.

Affected states parties Kazakhstan and New Zealand have already **submitted** such reports, and Kiribati plans to do so, taking advantage of the reporting guidelines and format.

Second, states parties should agree to focused discussions on a voluntary international trust fund, with the aim of examining the establishment of such a trust fund at the Third Meeting of States Parties. Such a decision would set clear parameters for the in-depth discussions, ensuring they are productive.

An international trust fund would promote victim assistance and environmental remediation by providing support for those activities. It would also help states parties meet their obligations under Article 7 by providing a mechanism for providing international cooperation and assistance.

In addition to adopting these specific decisions at the 2MSP, states parties should continue to live up to their other commitments related to Articles 6 and 7 under the Vienna Action Plan.

Per Action 30, affected states parties should build on their initial assessments and conduct more in-depth ones. In accordance with Action 31, they should further develop and begin to implement their national plans. Under Actions 23 and 32, all states parties in a position to do so should develop mechanisms for the provision of international cooperation and assistance and begin to use them.

States parties should also uphold the principle of inclusivity, and ensure affected communities as well as civil society, academia, and other experts, are included in all their activities.

Twenty-five states, along with the International Committee of the Red Cross and several civil society organizations, highlighted the importance of assisting victims, remediating the environment, and providing international cooperation and assistance in their general statements at the 2MSP. More will likely elaborate on their positions during the session on Articles 6 and 7.

Victim assistance and environmental remediation are long-term endeavors, and the steps described here merely represent a starting point. But they are valuable steps for initiating the process to addressing the ongoing harm caused by nuclear weapons use and testing. States parties should therefore adopt the proposed decisions on Articles 6 and 7 and engage in further national implementation measures in the intersessional period to help promote the humanitarian goals of the TPNW.

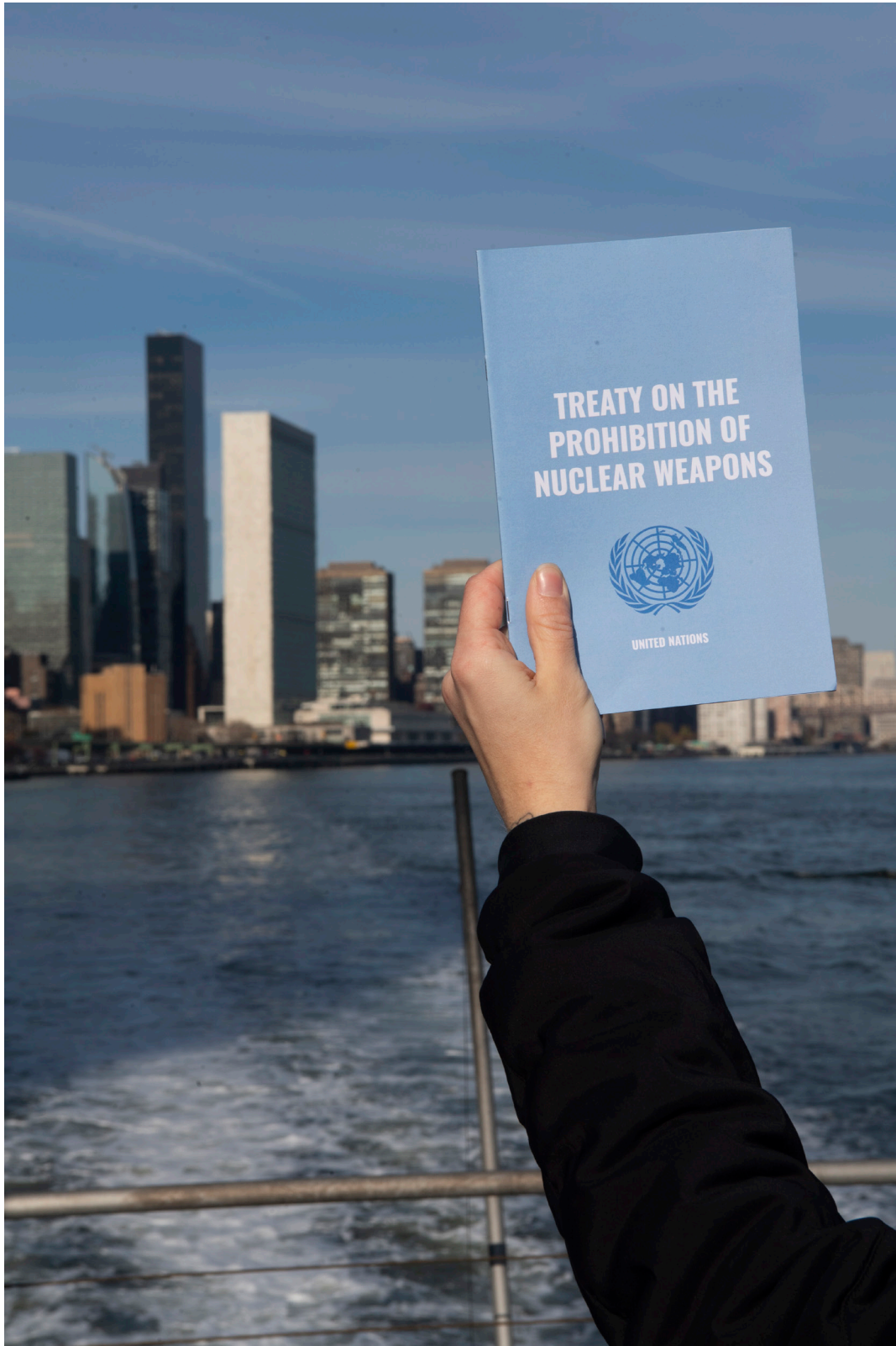


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Side Event: Perspectives on Ongoing Harm to Affected Communities and Next Steps

Iseult O'Callaghan and Sabrina Zhang | Harvard Law School's International Human Rights Clinic

In a side event held on the second day of the 2MSP, a panel discussed the perspectives of the continued harm experienced by affected communities, as well as the next steps of the TPNW in relation to Articles 6 and 7, which concern victim assistance, environmental remediation, and international cooperation and assistance.

The panel, moderated by Kelly Lundeen (Affected Communities and Allies Working Group, Nukewatch) and Elizabeth Minor (Article 36), featured:

- Tina Cordova (co-founder and executive director of the Tularosa Basin Downwinders Consortium);
- Petuuche Gilbert (Acoma Pueblo member and Indigenous leader, Multicultural Alliance for a Safe Environment, Indigenous World Association);
- Hinamoeura Cross (Member of Parliament, Assembly of French Polynesia)
- Mere Tuilau (Youngsolwara Pacific);
- Mari Inoue (Manhattan Project for a Nuclear-Free World, Affected Communities and Allies Working Group); and
- Alicia Sanders-Zakre, (Policy and Research Coordinator at ICAN).

The speakers discussed the legacies of nuclear weapons in their families, communities, and land. They spoke in length about intergenerational trauma, numerous health impacts, and the lack of accountability of colonial powers for their use and testing of nuclear weapons.

Tina Cordova, who is a member of the fourth generation in her family to be diagnosed with cancer since the nuclear weapons test in New Mexico in 1945, discussed the harm the Tularosa Basin community experienced and the lack of assistance or acknowledgement by the United States. She lamented how, even in the recent *Oppenheimer* film, there was no recognition of the community affected by the Trinity nuclear test, and noted that “there would be no Manhattan project without the local people of Los Alamos.”

Petuuche Gilbert said that 70 per cent of the world's global uranium production comes from Indigenous land, with 13,000 or more abandoned uranium mines in the United States alone. The radioactivity that emanates from abandoned uranium mines greatly affects local people and the environment. He further emphasized the need for progress on Articles 6 and 7 of the TPNW and better information about the health effects of uranium production.

Hinamoeura Cross, a member of the Parliament of French Polynesia and a Tahiti native, spoke about the lack of medical support to address the health impacts of radiation exposure, such as birth defects and high cancer rates, which have had an intergenerational effect in her family. Even now in French Polynesia, some people choose not to have children out of fear of them dying from childhood leukemia. Despite this, France, which conducted decades of nuclear weapon testing in the islands, refuses to acknowledge the lasting impact of nuclear weapon testing on the islands. Cross stressed the importance

of TPNW Articles 6 and 7 for victims of nuclear weapons testing and hoped they would soon apply to her community.

Mere Tuilau explained in detail the ongoing legacy of nuclear weapons for Fiji's test veterans. These veterans have suffered from different health problems, such as leukemia, hemophilia, and thyroid cancer, and have sought medical assistance and compensation for decades. She maintains hope that the new standards laid out in TPNW Articles 6 and 7 will encourage the United Kingdom, which exposed Fiji's troops to nuclear weapons testing in Kiribati, to address its role in the continued suffering of the people of Fiji from radiation.

A lawyer originally from Tokyo, Mari Inoue has worked tirelessly for justice for communities affected by radiation. She noted the recent Hiroshima "black rain" court decisions and attempts to expand the definition of those considered to be "hibakusha." She urged TPNW states parties to consider those affected by in utero exposure to radiation, storage of radioactive waste, uranium mining, or the contamination of environmental resources, in addition to multi-generational victims, as "victims" under national and international law.

Alicia Sanders-Zakre concluded the panel by giving ICAN's recommendations for the 2MSP and explaining how Articles 6 and 7 of the TPNW can provide an impetus for national victim assistance and environmental remediation efforts. Their rights-based approach is critical to ensuring increased assistance to survivors and affected communities. She also laid out several concrete steps states parties should take to advance implementation of these obligations, drawing on the Vienna Action Plan and the report of the Article 6-7 co-chairs' report.

Following the panelists' presentations, there was a discussion on the importance of developing horizontal networks among communities to increase the cohesiveness of advocacy. Additionally, the panelists addressed a question about how to bridge the often bureaucratic and technical language with the lived realities of victims. They stressed the need for inclusion of affected communities and translation to make meetings more accessible. Third-party actors and/or NGOs could help address these gaps.

Now, it is up to states parties at the Second Meeting of States Parties to adopt decisions to further advance the goals of Articles 6 and 7. These decisions should include adopting voluntary reporting guidelines and format and agreeing to discussions with the aim of establishing an international trust fund for victim assistance and environmental remediation by the Third Meeting of States Parties. States parties should also work toward national implementation of Articles 6-7 in the coming intersessional period.



NUCLEAR BAN DAILY

Reaching Critical Will (RCW) is the disarmament programme of the Women's International League for Peace and Freedom (WILPF), the oldest feminist peace organisation in the world.

RCW works for disarmament and the prohibition of many different weapon systems; confronting militarism and military spending; and exposing gendered aspects of the impact of weapons and disarmament processes with a feminist lens.

RCW also monitors and analyses international disarmament processes, providing primary resources, reporting, and civil society coordination at various UN-related forums.

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