

# NUCLEAR BAN DAILY

Civil society perspectives on the  
Second Meeting of States Parties to the  
Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons  
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**WILPF**

# Editorial: Building a Better World

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

In their **declaration** from the Second Meeting of States Parties (2MSP), states parties to the Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons (TPNW) issued a bold critique of the theories, doctrines, and practices of those who support nuclear weapons. “We reject attempts to normalize nuclear rhetoric and any notion of so-called ‘responsible’ behavior as far as nuclear weapons are concerned,” they said, noting that the “threat of inflicting mass destruction runs counter to the legitimate security interests of humanity as a whole” and that this “is a dangerous, misguided and unacceptable approach to security.” Refuting arguments from deterrence advocates that nuclear weapons preserve peace and security, TPNW states parties pointed out that, on the contrary, “nuclear weapons are used as instruments of policy, linked to coercion, intimidation and heightening of tensions.”

The declaration stands strong in opposition to nuclear deterrence, nuclear sharing arrangements, threats to use nuclear weapons, and investments in modernisation and expansion. It confirms that states parties “will not stand by as spectators to increasing nuclear risks and the dangerous perpetuation of nuclear deterrence” and recommits them to delegitimising, stigmatising, and eliminating nuclear weapons to make sure they are never used, tested, or threatened to be used ever again.

These strong proclamations are backed up by the **decisions** taken by states parties for further work, including the establishment of a consultative process on security concerns of states. This process, for which Austria has been appointed the coordinator, will advance arguments and recommendations to promote and articulate the legitimate security concerns and the threat and risk perceptions enshrined in the TPNW that result from the existence of nuclear weapons and the concept of nuclear deterrence. It will also seek to “challenge the security paradigm based on nuclear deterrence by highlighting and promoting new scientific evidence about the humanitarian consequences and risks of nuclear weapons and juxtaposing this with the risks and assumptions that are inherent in nuclear deterrence.”

This process offers a way to sharpen arguments about how, in practical terms, the TPNW provides for security. This is important for engaging with and countering the arguments made by nuclear-armed and nuclear-supportive states about their security concerns. In introducing its **proposal** for this consultative process, Austria said that TPNW states parties have not yet had sufficient impact on the security discourse of states that rely on nuclear weapons and that the TPNW community should work to develop further arguments to challenge the nuclear-proponent security paradigm based on the evidence on the consequences of nuclear weapons and risk.

The agreement to initiative this work makes it clear that TPNW states parties understand the need to consult internally to change narratives about nuclear weapons that can then have practical implications for doctrines, policies, and practices of those who currently stand outside of the Treaty. As part of this work, states parties also responded positively to the Scientific Advisory Group's proposal for a UN-mandated study on the impacts of nuclear war, which would help build global understanding on the humanitarian and environmental impacts of nuclear weapons, which can be used to help build further momentum and mobilisation for nuclear disarmament.

In addition, TPNW states parties also agreed to a structure for intersessional work between now and the third meeting of states parties to continue the working groups on universalisation of the Treaty, victim assistance and environmental remediation, and nuclear weapon elimination, as well as a gender focal point. They also adopted a reporting format and guidelines for voluntary reporting on the implementation of Articles 6 and 7 of the TPNW in relation to victim assistance, environmental remediation, and

international cooperation, and they agreed to focused discussions on the feasibility of and possible guidelines for establishing an international trust fund for victim assistance and environmental remediation.

The adoption of these tangible decisions that will help propel the effective implementation of the TPNW stands in stark contrast to the challenges faced in other nuclear weapon treaty bodies. Earlier this year at the Non-Proliferation Treaty (NPT) Preparatory Committee, NPT states parties **could not even reach consensus** about what documents to list in their final report. The commitment to finding diplomatic solutions to disagreements among TPNW states parties could not be more different than the hostility and tensions that have been undermining the NPT for years.

Furthermore, the diversity of participation in TPNW meetings of states parties and intersessional work is unparalleled in other nuclear weapon processes. The perspectives and expertise are being increasingly centred in the work on humanitarian and environmental impacts of nuclear weapons and Indigenous Peoples have been involved in shaping narratives and designing policy.

Of course, more can and must be done to ensure that those impacted the most by nuclear weapons are at the core of the work to achieve nuclear abolition. More can and must be done to ensure that marginalised knowledge is included meaningfully in deliberations and in outcomes of TPNW meetings. As was seen by comments hostile to gender diversity from the Holy See, Democratic Republic of the Congo, and Kiribati in response to the gender focal point's presentation, integrating into the TPNW's work progressive perspectives on gender and intersectionality is crucial. These include perspectives that recognise the realities of gender diversity and the intersections that gender has with race, class, sexuality, disability, and more, and perspectives that challenge outdated, binary notions of identity and existence. This is imperative for advancing truly inclusive and transformative solution to nuclear weapons.

Including in the work of the TPNW people who have been deliberately silenced on nuclear weapons in the past, because of their sex, gender, sexual orientation, race, geography, disability, age, etc., or because they have lived experience with nuclear weapon use, testing, and production, is a key way the TPNW can broaden and deepen argument against nuclear weapons. This makes inclusivity and diversity an urgent priority for the work not just on victim assistance and environmental remediation, but also for the new consultative process on security arguments and, if it is established, the UN study on the impacts of nuclear war.

There is much more work to be done for the achievement of nuclear abolition, and the obstacles can sometimes feel unsurmountable, especially amidst rampant nuclear weapon modernisation, abrogation of arms control treaties, and threats of use. But there is another way, another world, that is actively being built by the TPNW community. The nuclear-armed states might be heading down the right path while their nuclear-supportive allies either actively facilitate that or stand on the sidelines saying nothing can be until they turn around. But TPNW states parties, working with activists, academics, and others committed to peace and justice, are proving that we do not have to wait. We can lead by example; we can chart the course for and do the work to build a better future for all.

Unlike the nuclear-armed states professed commitment to nuclear disarmament, this is not rhetoric. This is reality, being shaped and created by those told for so long that we had no power, no say on these issues. We proved this to be incorrect by negotiating and adopting the TPNW, and we are doing it again now by implementing it. Despite the different approaches and priorities among some states parties, despite the clinging to old conceptions of identity by some, the commitment to nuclear abolition, to security based on disarmament and peace instead of violence and fear, binds the TPNW community together, and invites everyone to join. Abolition is a process, but it is well underway.

## Article 2: Declarations

Laura Varella | Reaching Critical Will of the Women's International League for Peace and Freedom

On Wednesday, 29 November, delegations discussed Article 2, Declarations. The Secretary-General of the meeting, Mr. Chris King, reminded all states about the obligation to submit a declaration informing about the ownership, possession, or control of nuclear weapons not later than 30 days after this Treaty enters into force for that State Party. Mr. King informed that the UN Office for Disarmament Affairs has received 67 declarations so far.

South Africa reiterated that the declaration is not burdensome and recommended the template prepared by the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC). Similarly, Mexico expressed appreciation for the work of the ICRC and the International Campaign to Abolish Nuclear Weapons (ICAN), and recommended the **Nuclear Weapons Ban Monitor** as a useful tool to track progress on states policies and practices related to nuclear weapons.

## Article 12: Universalisation

Laura Varella | Reaching Critical Will of the Women's International League for Peace and Freedom

On Wednesday, 29 November, delegations discussed Article 12, Universalisation. The Co-Chairs of the informal working group, South Africa and Malaysia, presented the **report** submitted to the conference. The Co-Chairs said they have been guided by articles 1–14 of the Vienna Action Plan, which focuses on universalisation. They informed that the report highlights several activities and efforts undertaken within the informal working group, including regional and bilateral meetings, ceremonies, seminars, and several other activities. It also reflects the signatures and ratifications of the TPNW between the First and Second Meeting of States Parties. They highlighted the report's recommendations, including for states parties to encourage the continued implementation of actions 1–14 of the Vienna Action Plan, including the reporting on and publication of activities by states parties in this regard; to encourage collaboration with the Scientific Advisory Group to raise awareness of the Treaty at international conferences and through the commissioning of studies and publications to promote the case for the Treaty; and to renew the mandate of the Co-Chairs in order to continue the efforts to facilitate universalisation of the Treaty through action-oriented initiatives.

Many speakers thanked the Co-Chairs for their work and welcomed the recent signatures, ratifications, and accessions to the TPNW.

Aotearoa New Zealand informed that it submitted a **report** and engaged in several activities promoting the universalisation of the Treaty. It also expressed support for the **working paper** submitted by Austria. Costa Rica also supported the working paper and the understanding reflected in it, which recognises that the universalisation of the TPNW is not simply about signing a treaty, but about a paradigm shift in the perception of international security. Costa Rica stressed, "We must continue to move towards human security-based approaches to security. This implies a gradual transition and a continued commitment to replace nuclear deterrence with new forms of conflict management and resolution." The Co-Chairs also expressed support for this broad notion of universalisation and welcomed the working paper put forward by Austria.

In this vein, Austria defended a “two-tier approach to universalisation,” focusing efforts on getting more states to join the Treaty and also universalising the narrative around it. It thanked the support from states to the resolution about the TPNW proposed in the United Nations General Assembly (UNGA) First Committee and welcomed the numerous statements about the TPNW in relevant fora. Austria also promoted a **recent study** on nuclear weapons, which provides new evidence about their humanitarian impacts.

The ICRC said that it is urgent to promote nuclear disarmament and the universalisation of the Treaty, not despite the international security environment, but because of it. It also highlighted the materials produced to support states in universalisation efforts, including the “ratification kit” and the interpretative guidance to the TPNW.

Senzatomica underlined that the North Atlantic Treaty Organisation (NATO) states face no legal impediment to becoming TPNW states parties, and that the TPNW offers these states a practical means of reinvigorating their pursuit of NATO’s professed goal of reducing and eliminating the threat posed by nuclear weapons. Other civil society organisations, including the International Trade Union Confederation, Japan NGO network for nuclear weapons abolition, and Seguridad Humana en Latinoamerica y el Caribe (SEHLAC), also highlighted the importance of universalisation efforts.

Trinidad and Tobago expressed appreciation of the work of ICAN in the CARICOM region and took note of Annex 1 of the report. Guatemala shared that together with ICAN, it is proposing to organise an event entitled “Advancement Towards a World Free of Nuclear Weapons: Perspectives from Latin America and the Caribbean” as a way of promoting the ratification of the Treaty in the region. Mexico also highlighted the efforts of states from Latin America and the Caribbean in universalising the TPNW. Costa Rica and Uruguay made similar remarks and called for the remaining states in the region to ratify or accede to the TPNW. El Salvador highlighted the need for a paradigm shift regarding nuclear deterrence, stressing that this change of mindset needs to be brought about in universalisation work.

ICAN reminded states that they have an obligation under article 12 to encourage non-state parties to join the Treaty and invited all to reflect on what they could do to implement this provision. It also noted that while more than 49 states have expressed support for the TPNW through the UNGA resolution, many have not yet taken steps to accede to the Treaty. ICAN further highlighted several universalisation activities undertaken, including the regional seminar on universalisation held in Pretoria, South Africa, in January 2023. Equatorial Guinea and Cabo Verde also congratulated civil society, particularly ICAN, for the outreach work. Mozambique and Djibouti reiterated their commitment to ratify the TPNW soon. The civil society organisation Disarmament and Arms Control said that despite the strong support of the African region in the adoption of the TPNW, its pace of adherence to the Treaty has been slow when compared with the impressive progress achieved in Latin America, the Caribbean and the Pacific—though it is still well ahead of Europe. The organisation said it stands ready with other ICAN partners across Africa to assist states to advance their ratification processes.

Chile stressed the importance of education for disarmament and welcomed the participation of civil society, women’s organisations, and academia in activities. Kiribati also stressed that disarmament education is linked with universalisation of the Treaty and highlighted several initiatives it undertook in partnership with civil society. Soka Gakkai International referenced its working paper on disarmament education, which provides several recommendations to TPNW states parties on the topic. The Co-Chairs recognised the importance of disarmament education in universalisation efforts.



## Article 4: Towards the Elimination of Nuclear Weapons

Laura Varella | Reaching Critical Will of the Women's International League for Peace and Freedom

The co-chair for matters pertaining to implementation of Article 4 of the TPNW, Aotearoa New Zealand, presented the report submitted to the session. It explained that Article 4 of the TPNW envisages the designation of a “competent international authority,” which would have a dual mandate, including both a negotiation function and a verification function. Aotearoa New Zealand stressed that in this early stage of implementation of the Treaty, further understanding, reflection, and work is required before the establishment of such authority. It said that during the intersessional period, the Group met five times, and that it decided to tackle verification issues first. Aotearoa New Zealand presented a series of questions formulated to the Scientific Advisory Group to be worked on in the upcoming intersessional period and said that it is likely that work will need to continue over several years before it reaches the point of preparing and putting forward recommendations and conclusions.

All speakers thanked Aotearoa New Zealand and Mexico for their work as co-chairs of the informal working group. Malaysia asked the co-chairs to expand further on their insights about the challenges of addressing the subject of nuclear disarmament verification, while Austria asked them about possible cooperation with other bodies, such as the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) and the Preparatory Commission for the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban-Treaty Organisation (CTBTO).

Both South Africa and Cuba expressed support for this “step-by-step process” in establishing an international authority. Cuba also expressed support for the creation of an implementation support unit (ISU).

Mr. Moritz Kütt, member of the Scientific Advisory Group, highlighted that a number of elements of nuclear weapon programmes need to be considered in relation to verification, including the fuel cycle, delivering systems, and infrastructure. He referenced his [presentation](#) delivered about this earlier in the week. Mr. Kütt also stressed the need for developing capacity building for disarmament verification. ICAN drew attention to the June 2022 report on Disarmament Verification by UNIDIR and to the analysis by Scientific Advisory Group members Sébastien Philippe and Zia Mian in their essay on “The TPNW and nuclear disarmament verification: shifting the paradigm.” ICAN underscored that the overall goal must be “not just to destroy nuclear weapons but to eliminate weapon programmes” and embed “active reassurance” approaches and mechanisms that involve civil society as well as states in pursuing “irreversible, verifiable and transparent” disarmament, thereby reinforcing the humanitarian and security goals of the TPNW.

Mexico, answering Malaysia's question about challenges in disarmament verification, explained that current systems in place are focused on verifying that non-nuclear-armed states are not developing nuclear weapons, and that the TPNW needs a new verification regime that ensures that countries that have nuclear weapons can discontinue them, in a verifiable and transparent manner. It reiterated what has been expressed in the co-chair's report that this activity requires a lot of discussion and that there is no rush in establishing an authority without serious consideration. On the issue of confidence building, Mexico underlined the challenge of establishing cooperation with existing verification structures, including the CTBTO, IAEA, OPANAL, and structures from nuclear weapon free zones, and said that all TPNW states parties have to undertake some concrete national measures to ensure confidence building of their officials nationally. On Cuba's proposal about an ISU, Mexico said states parties need to consider lessons from previous experiences in other treaties so as to avoid any financial burden on TPNW states parties. Aotearoa New Zealand stressed the importance of the cooperation with the Scientific Advisory Group.

# Articles 6 and 7: Victim Assistance, Environmental Remediation, and International Cooperation

Ray Acheson and Laura Varella | Reaching Critical Will of WILPF

On 30 November, delegations discussed work on implementing Articles 6 and 7 of the TPNW. This report provides highlights from the discussion and is not a comprehensive accounting of all views expressed.

## Intersessional working group

Kazakhstan, the co-chair of the informal Working Group on Victim Assistance, Environmental Mediation, and International Cooperation and Assistance, highlighted in its presentation that the Group organised substantive consultations with a diverse range of stakeholders, including representatives of academia, the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC), the International Campaign to Abolish Nuclear Weapons (ICAN), and affected communities. The Group focused the work in three areas: national implementation measures, reporting, and the development of an International Trust Fund.

All speakers thanked Kazakhstan and Kiribati in leading the intersessional work on Articles 6 and 7 on victim assistance and environmental remediation (VA/ER) and on international cooperation and assistance and welcomed their report to 2MSP.

Aotearoa New Zealand, Austria, Chile, and ICAN welcomed that meetings of the Articles 6 and 7 working group included accounts from witnesses and victims living in affected communities. Switzerland welcomed survivor testimonies and scientific evidence presented to 2MSP. A joint statement by 32 civil society organisations welcomed the co-chairs' efforts to include civil society experts in the deliberations of the working group and urged further efforts to build inclusive ways of working.

The Holy See encouraged the co-chairs to redouble their efforts to involve Indigenous communities in discussions concerning Articles 6 and 7. Costa Rica said that all of the work on Articles 6 and 7, as well as the rest of the TPNW, should be done in an inclusive manner that meaningfully involves affected communities along with civil society, academia, and other relevant experts. Chile welcomed the contributions of the Scientific Advisory Group (SAG) to the work on Articles 6 and 7.

## Reporting

Kazakhstan said the co-chairs have sought input on the development of the reporting guidelines and format from various stakeholders, including states, international organisations, civil society, and affected communities, and that they look forward to states parties providing further information during the next intersessional period on their initial assessments, progress on national plans, international cooperation and assistance, and proposals for promoting national implementation measures.

Aotearoa New Zealand said it was pleased that the co-chairs have developed provisional voluntary reporting formats, and said it submitted a national response using the format. Costa Rica welcomed the submission of initial national reports using the proposed guidelines and format by Kazakhstan and New Zealand and the forthcoming one from Kiribati.

The ICRC supported the standardised voluntary reporting guidelines and format, as they can facilitate reporting and contribute to a better understanding of existing needs and responses.

The joint civil society statement recommended that states adopt and use the proposed voluntary reporting guidelines and format and welcomed that some states are already using these tools.

Costa Rica, as well as ICAN and Harvard Law School's International Human Rights Clinic jointly urged states parties to adopt and use the voluntary reporting guidelines and format proposed in the co-chairs' report. They supported the proposal to allow for further improvement of the voluntary reporting guidelines and format over time.

Austria, Fiji, and South Africa also welcomed the reporting guidelines. In its closing remarks, Kazakhstan encourage states parties to provide reports based on the template.

### **International trust fund**

Kiribati said that the under Action 29 of the Vienna Action Plan, state parties resolved to discuss the feasibility of, and propose possible guidelines for, establishing an International Trust Fund (ITF) for affected states. To initiate the dialogue, the co-chairs presented a series of questions to states parties, which included: Who should be allowed to contribute to a trust fund? Who and what should be eligible to receive grants from the trust fund? What kind of projects should be funded? Who should make decisions regarding disbursement of grants and on what basis? Should there be restrictions on the length and size of grants? What measures should exist regarding reporting accountability, and what structures are necessary?

The co-chairs had multiple consultations on the topic, which included presentations by experts, government agencies, civil society, and affected communities. In addition, several states parties submitted written responses and participated in the discussions at these meetings. Kiribati said that the majority of states expressed a strong interest in the topic of voluntary trust fund and its potential to help address the needs of affected communities.

The co-chairs recommended that the TPNW Second Meeting of States Parties should adopt a decision to include focused discussions regarding the feasibility of and possible guidelines for an international trust fund for victims' assistance and environmental remediation under the stewardship of the current co-chairs. In these discussions, the Group would seek to develop the terms of reference for a trust fund which would be proposed for adoption at the Third Meeting of States Parties (3MSP). They recommended that the Group should present a report to the 3MSP with recommendations related to the feasibility of and possible guidelines for the establishment of a trust fund.

Several speakers, including Aotearoa New Zealand, Costa Rica, Fiji, and Reverse the Trend, supported the development of an international trust fund for implementation of Articles 6 and 7. Fiji welcomed the progress on the discussions to establish the fund. It stressed that the trust fund should not be used by those responsible for the use of nuclear weapons as a means of circumventing their decisions to join the TPNW. It also said that states need to ensure that those responsible for such testing are held accountable and send a strong message that testing and indiscriminate use of nuclear weapons is not acceptable and that a user-pay principle should be applied to address long-term effects on human health and the environment.

The joint civil society statement urged states to engage in focused discussion to develop the structures and resources needed to establish an effective voluntary international trust fund at the Third Meeting of States Parties. Costa Rica, along with ICAN and Harvard, recommended that states parties decide in the 2MSP final report to hold focused discussions on an international trust fund in the next intersessional period, under the auspices of the informal working group on Articles 6 and 7, and to use those discussions to develop guidelines for a trust fund with the aim of establishing such a fund at the 3MSP.



Austria, Cuba, the Holy See, and the ICRC also supported continued discussions.

Peace Boat urged that the trust fund should assist states parties in implementing their obligations under Article 6 and facilitate research on the needs and practices of affected people. Peace Boat suggested the fund could be supported not only by states parties, but by all states, international organisations, and civil society organisations. It also urged that those eligible for assistance should not be limited to those from states parties, but should include nuclear victims anywhere in the world.

In its closing remarks, Kazakhstan hoped the trust fund could be utilised to provide not only financial support but also technical and in-kind support.

### **Engagement with other forums and non-state parties**

Switzerland highlighted the success of the First Committee resolutions on the humanitarian impacts of nuclear weapons (HINW) and VA/ER in building momentum for the HINW to be an area of work that can unite all states. Austria, Costa Rica, Ireland, and the ICRC also welcomed the VA/ER resolution. The joint civil society statement said the resolution reflects the TPNW's influence over the international conversation.

Switzerland said it remains interested in next steps by states parties on Articles 6 and 7, including possible contributions from non-state parties. The joint civil society statement noted that many states that are not yet party have expressed commitment to addressing nuclear legacies, and encouraged these states to join the TPNW and to constructively engage with states parties' work, including through observing the TPNW's meetings. Many who should be here this week are not.

### **Future work**

Costa Rica said that affected states parties should build on their initial assessments of victims' needs and environmental contamination and do more in-depth studies. It also said they should further develop and implement their national plans, and that state parties in a position to do so should commit to engage in international cooperation and assistance and report on their plans to do so.

On national implementation measures, Fiji said that more time should be given to reporting on environmental remediation, as this requires planning a response to radiation from explosive and underground nuclear tests on remote islands and in marine settings, which is a unique condition of Pacific Islands nuclear testing. Fiji also said that getting information on radiation impacts is often difficult, with information held by the former nuclear test countries. It called on the international community to take measures to assist with independent reviews on environmental impacts, protection, and remediation in affected regions.

Chile highlighted the importance of cooperation and accountability, and of further statistical information on harms.

Switzerland called for needs assessments and the development of infrastructure that ensures sufficient, long-term resources for work in this area.

The joint civil society statement called on affected states parties to continue their work on assessments and national plans, developing specific requests for assistance.

The joint civil society statement called on all states parties to develop cooperation and assistance with affected states, and to centre affected communities. Peace Boat urged work to enhance understandings

of the multidimensional nature of harm, noting that “input on victim assistance must be from a broad range of victims and stakeholders, and that such discussions should be open to all who consider themselves nuclear victims. Many such people may belong to marginalized communities within their own countries, and this has been further concealed under systems of power such as colonialism and racism, including in the case of Indigenous communities.”

ICAN and Harvard jointly encouraged states parties to prioritise national implementation measures in the coming intersessional period. They suggested that affected states parties should complete their initial assessments and continue to develop and begin to operationalise their national plans. They noted that states parties in a position to do so should, at the same time, work to develop mechanisms for and provide international cooperation and assistance for affected states parties’ VA/ER measures.

Reverse the Trend asked the co-chairs how work on Articles 6 and 7 can compensate future generations for harms caused by nuclear testing. Kazakhstan said it will need to assess needs of affected communities and levels of contributions to provide support for support for future generations.

Austria asked what contributions Vienna-based organisations, such as the IAEA and CTBTO, can bring, and if there are any plans to involve national expertise, including from medical institutions and universities in the work of the Group. In response, Kazakhstan said that it undertook 42 national projects in coordination with the IAEA Technical Cooperation Programme. Kazakhstan has also implemented projects for remediating the test site with different universities and academic institutions.

## Article 5: National Implementation Measures

Ray Acheson | Reaching Critical Will of the Women’s International League for Peace and Freedom

On 30 November, delegations discussed implementation of Article 5 on national implementation. This report provides highlights from the discussion and is not a comprehensive accounting of all views expressed.

### Declarations

Cuba said it does not have any nuclear weapons on its territory but does not assume any responsibility for Guantanamo Bay due to the US occupation of that land. Mexico likewise said it has never had a nuclear weapon programme or related installations. Austria said that constitutionally it does not and cannot possess, store, or station nuclear weapon on its territory and cannot transit fissile materials except for non-weapon purposes.

### Law and legislation

Cuba reiterated the central role of national governments to ensure adherence to provisions of the Treaty and said it supports the development of national legislative capacity in this regard. Mexico said to facilitate the implementation of the obligations of the TPNW and other nuclear disarmament treaties it seeking to consolidate these laws.

The International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC) **encouraged** states parties to designate the competent international authority or authorities for the implementation of Article 4 of the Treaty and provide them with an appropriate mandate to carry out their tasks. It also called on states to adopt

criminal legislation, including the imposition of penal sanctions, to ensure respect for the Treaty's provisions within their territory and by persons under their jurisdiction or control. The ICRC also said states parties need to establish national focal points for articles 6 and 7, adopt and adapt relevant national laws and policies, engage with relevant stakeholders including affected communities, and cooperate with the UN system and other relevant organisations on developing their implementation framework. States should also continue implementing the gender provisions of the Treaty and consider specific implementation action to operationalise them with the guidance of the Action Plan. Finally, the ICRC outlined the resources it has developed to assist states with this work.

## Financing and assistance

The International Campaign to Abolish Nuclear Weapons (ICAN) delivered a **statement** on behalf of 93 investors representing over \$1 trillion in assets under management arguing that financing nuclear weapon production or maintenance constitutes “assistance,” which is prohibited by the TPNW. “Financing gives life to the production process. The treaty’s prohibition with assistance on banned acts means it is also against the treaty to authorize investment of public or private funds in the development, production, manufacturing or stockpiling of nuclear weapons or other nuclear explosive devices,” said the statement.

States bear the responsibility for the full implementation of the TPNW and for ensuring that all those operating within their jurisdiction adhere to the standards set forth. “Financial sector actors, including banks, asset managers, pension funds and investment advisors often operate across numerous jurisdictions, and benefit from clear guidance from States.” To that end, the investors encouraged TPNW states parties to require that state-owned enterprises “fully integrate the TPNW prohibition on all forms of assistance throughout their operations, as role models, and we encourage states parties to incorporate best practices from the FATF Proliferation Financing Controls and ensure that obligations under the treaty are extended to both state and non-state (including private sector) actors within their jurisdiction.”

Nuclear Ban US also **noted** that the nuclear weapons business is not just conducted by states, highlighting that there are at least two dozen international corporations responsible for developing, building, and maintaining nuclear weapons on behalf of the nuclear-armed states, and that there are universities and research institutions engaged in related research.

## Future work

Nuclear Ban US urged TPNW states parties to establish an intersessional working group on article 5 to complement the existing workstreams.



# Scientific Advisory Group

Laura Varella and Ray Acheson | Reaching Critical Will of WILPF

On 30 November, delegations discussed the work of the TPNW's Scientific Advisory Group (SAG). This report provides highlights from the discussion and is not a comprehensive accounting of all views expressed.

## Introduction of the report

The co-chairs of the SAG, Dr. Zia Mian and Dr. Patricia Lewis, introduced the **SAG's report** to 2MSP and gave an overview of the work undertaken so far. The Group has launched a scoping exercise related to developing a global network of scientists and others to support the SAG's work. The SAG's current term goes until the first review conference of the TPNW.

The SAG's initial report includes information on the global status of nuclear weapons, risks and recent threats to use nuclear weapons, humanitarian impact of nuclear weapons (HINW), and nuclear disarmament and related issues. The co-chairs gave an update on world nuclear forces based on available data, including warheads, fissile materials, and modernisation plans. They warned that the risks of use have increased with recent threats to use nuclear weapons and increased tensions and conflicts among nuclear-armed states.

In relation to the HINW, the co-chairs highlighted that current scientific knowledge is still not as complete and comprehensive as it could be. The SAG is working to identify specific open questions for research to support TPNW implementation in relation to the HINW, including assessments of implications on human populations and the environment in the short- and long-term, and of implications for human societies and natural ecosystems. The co-chairs urged that consideration be given to a global scientific study on the broad humanitarian, environmental, social, and economic impacts of nuclear war, perhaps providing a preliminary assessment for the first TPNW review conference. The co-chairs also said there is a need for comprehensive reconstruction of the impact of nuclear testing on local communities and the SAG would like to help promote such an assessment.

In relation to nuclear disarmament and other issues, the co-chairs highlighted the implications of nuclear weapon modernisation for disarmament, verification, irreversibility, and confidence building. They urged consideration of how nuclear disarmament builds on and goes beyond arms control verification and safeguards systems with the goal of building a system where verification can enable nuclear-armed states to disarm, join safeguards, and move in a systematic, collaborative way within the treaty community to become nuclear weapon free states. This will require transformations of institutions, security identities, and other factors, which will become part of a verification process.

Aoteroa New Zealand, Austria, Costa Rica, Chile, Cuba, Ireland, Malaysia, Mexico, and South Africa thanked the SAG for its valuable contribution to the TPNW and for the reports presented. Austria and Costa Rica noted that the members of the SAG are volunteers and supported further discussions on ways of ensuring resources for the Group to ensure diversity and sustainability.

## Modernisation of arsenals

Costa Rica welcomed the report's recommendations for further research, including paragraph 26 on the need for future research to better understand several aspects pertaining to the current arms race. Austria appreciated the fact that the report pointed out that all states are modernising their arsenals, which



raises problematic questions about the Non-Proliferation Treaty (NPT) and implementation of its Article VI. Ireland asked how the length of time of modernisations plans might affect the analysis on risks.

In response to Ireland, Dr. Lewis said that while the Group hasn't done a detailed analysis of that, it would be an interesting subject to look into. Some of the elements that could be considered are the investments made in weapons that would become obsolete, and the possibility that some technologies could be repurposed, for instance related to command and control. Dr. Mian added that these weapons systems have very long lifetimes and that their creation anchors nuclear issue in the future. For instance, in some cases, the military officers that will be in charge of operationalising those weapons that are now being designed and developed have not yet been born. By building these weapons, the government creates jobs for military officers and weapon designers down the road. Another factor he highlighted is that states' responses to each other's weapons systems take a long time. When a state decide to modernise its weapons in response to the modernisation of another state, this process takes decades, and by the end of it the risks may become very different.

### **Global scientific study on effects of nuclear war**

Costa Rica welcomed further discussion on how to take forward the report's suggestion of a global scientific study on the climatic, environmental, physical, and social effects in the weeks to decades following nuclear war, as outlined in paragraph 60. Aoteroa New Zealand asked for further information on this proposal.

Dr. Mian answered that the first benefit would be to show that there is actually a global interest, not just of the TPNW community, in a better shared understanding of the impacts of nuclear war, arrived at publicly and transparently by scientists from all over the world. He said that if such a study were to be launched, it would send a signal to the global scientific community that there is worthwhile research to be done on this set of questions. He gave the example of the climate change science community, which by virtue of having global policymaker attention drawn to the impacts of climate change by producing the reports of the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC), this encouraged scientists from all over the world to think about how they could apply their research to something that they see as a global public good.

### **Scientific network**

Cuba said that in the report presented, there was a reference regarding the creation of an informal working group on a scientific network, and asked how the Group proposed to involve states parties in the work of finding the experts to compose the network, considering that many of the research takes place in countries that develop nuclear weapons.

Dr. Lewis clarified that the report includes an extensive discussion about the establishment of such a network. She said that the Group has been very active in thinking this through, reaching out to states for names of institution and individuals, and have collected a repository of names that can be added to.

### **Nuclear risks**

Mexico highlighted the usefulness of the chapter about nuclear risks and how they can be categorised. It said that having a scientific foundation to catalogue impacts would be extremely helpful for states parties. Mexico asked about the contribution of nuclear weapon free zones in terms of risks and status of modernisation of arsenals. Dr. Lewis said that this research has been done by others and that could be something to include in the Group's future work.



## Nuclear disarmament verification

Malaysia asked if the co-chairs could expand on disarmament verification and concepts such as “irreversibility,” “conversion,” and “nuclear weapon programmes,” as laid out in paragraph 82 of page 33 of the report’s enhanced version, and the recommendation made for disarmament measures that go beyond approaches that are focused on nuclear warheads and nuclear weapon materials.

Dr. Mian explained that irreversibility, conversion, and the definition of nuclear weapon programmes and broadening the scope of verification flows directly from the TPNW itself, because the Treaty forged fundamentally new ground from existing arms control measures of all kinds by not focusing attention exclusively on weapons. Rather, the TPNW considers weapon programmes and the work that weapons do in terms of harming people and planet. He noted that the Group has already started thinking about what would be the elements of a nuclear weapon programme and in terms of verification, and recommended the report about UNIDIR on the topic. Dr. Mian said that moving away from the traditional concept of “strategic stability” verification, with its singular focus on a nuclear warhead as the only object that merits attention, allows for new research that, for example, looks into the changes of structures of legislation and procedures once a nuclear-armed states decides to disarm.

## Intersessional Structure

Laura Varella | Reaching Critical Will of the Women’s International League for Peace and Freedom

The President of 2MSP introduced **Working Paper 2**, “International Structure for the Implementation of the Treaty.” He said that the intersessional structure was an effective means of coordinating the work between the first and second meeting of states parties (MSPs). He highlighted that the participation of the International Campaign to Abolish Nuclear Weapons (ICAN), including in the informal working groups, attests to the inclusive character of the Treaty. The President recommended that the intersessional structure should be maintained throughout the interval between the second and third MSPs, and that a draft decision reflecting this was submitted for the consideration of 2MSP.

Austria supported the proposal by the President. Cuba expressed support for a flexible and informal structure, until there are sufficient states, activities, and resources to organise an intersectional work of other nature. It supported the informal working groups and the participation of other actors. It reaffirmed the importance that the recommendations produced by the working groups are considered by all states parties. Mexico supported that all intersessional meetings continue to be inclusive and open to all states parties, civil society organisations, and academic institutions.

ICAN **said** that inclusive ways of working have been critical to the TPNW’s development and progress so far and will continue to be crucial to the TPNW’s success. It welcomed steps taken during the first intersessional period to invite presentations, interventions, and written contributions to the work and proposed draft decisions of the informal working groups from non-governmental experts, which has included those from affected communities from various countries, Indigenous Peoples, and Non-Self-Governing territories. To promote effective coordination by ICAN, and effective, equitable, and inclusive participation by stakeholder groups, ICAN recommended that all informal working group co-chairs take several practical steps, including that the co-chairs develop, consult on, and share a schedule of their work and meetings for each year ahead; take all possible steps to maximise accessibility to all stakeholder groups at meetings, including considering translation needs, time zones, and effective formats; and take specific organisational steps to facilitate the participation of individuals from affected communities, including Indigenous Peoples.

In this regard, ICAN put forward several recommendations, including referring to the **Protocols for Seeking Nuclear Truth with Integrity** developed by the **Nuclear Truth Project**; consulting on preferences for forms and formats of contributions; ensuring that opportunities to contribute are shared well in advance, and at least four weeks ahead, and being clear about the purpose and results of participation; considering how contributions can be compensated financially where this is necessary for participation; and considering extending formal invitations to Indigenous Peoples to attend meetings.

The Malaysian Youth Diplomacy also put forward several **recommendations** regarding youth participation, including a stronger and aggressive Diversity, Equity and Inclusion (DEI) policy to be implemented during the intersessional sessions.

Austria introduced **Working Paper 9**, “Universalising the Security Concerns of State Parties under the TPNW.” Austria said that the TPNW is underpinned by very strong scientific evidence that underscores the humanitarian consequences of nuclear weapons would be more global and that the risks associated with nuclear weapons would be more complex than previously understood. The evidence also suggests that peoples of all states anywhere on Earth are at considerable risk of becoming collateral damage in case of nuclear conflict. Thus, the TPNW articulates legitimate security concerns that are widely shared among the non-nuclear majority of states, and also challenges the very calculus of basing security on the persistent threat of global mass destruction.

Nevertheless, Austria said that TPNW states parties have not yet had sufficient impact on the security discourse of states that rely on nuclear weapons, and that there seems to be a disconnect between the arguments about security put forward by the nuclear-armed states and the nuclear insecurity arguments based on the evidence on the humanitarian consequences and risks. Austria said that TPNW states parties have to find ways to better promote and articulate concerns expressed in the TPNW, and how to develop further arguments to challenge the security paradigm based on the evidence on the consequences of nuclear weapons and risk. It said that Working Paper 9 proposes to establish an consultative process between the Second and Third MSPs, with the involvement of the Scientific Advisory Group, ICAN, the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC), and other stakeholders, to consult and to submit the report to 3MSP with a comprehensive set of arguments and recommendations on this issue.

Mexico supported this proposal, saying it gives clarity on the necessary consultations for the intersessional period.



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# Complementarity

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

On 1 December, delegations discussed the complementarity of the TPNW with other international instruments such as the Non-Proliferation Treaty (NPT), the Comprehensive-Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty (CTBT), nuclear weapon free zone (NWFZ) treaties, and others. This report provides highlights from the discussion and is not a comprehensive accounting of all views expressed.

## Report of the co-facilitators

The co-facilitators of the work on complementarity, Ireland and Thailand, presented their **report** to 2MSP. The report highlights various events and engagements of states parties, signatories, international organisations, and civil society in advancing notions of the TPNW's complementarity with other agreements. The facilitators explained that informal consultation were held on the draft report in late September and it does not include an account of work on this issue at the First Committee in October, but there was positive acceptance of the TPNW throughout that meeting. The facilitators also highlighted some of the ways the TPNW can tangibly cooperate with other instruments, including in relation to work on the humanitarian impacts of nuclear weapons, victim assistance and environmental remediation, nuclear safety and security, and more. They highlighted the report's recommendation for states parties to engage with the Scientific Advisory Group and other bodies to, among other things, identify and explore the TPNW's complementarity with regard to gender considerations, environmental considerations, victim assistance, human rights, and other related issues.

Malaysia welcomed the recommendations in the report. The Holy See welcomed the report and Peru said the report is a good start to shape the legal and scientific arguments in favour of convergence and complementarity among the treaties. Switzerland took note of the important work of the co-facilitators.

## Examples of and arguments for complementarity

The International Campaign to Abolish Nuclear Weapons (ICAN) **said** the TPNW and the Non-Proliferation Treaty (NPT) "exist side by side and are mutually reinforcing." ICAN recalled "that the negotiators of the TPNW took great care to ensure that this new legal instrument would complement and reinforce earlier treaties, and in no way undermine them," and it has been successful in this regard. They also noted that this view is supported by UN Secretary-General António Guterres, who remarked in 2018 that the TPNW and NPT are fully compatible.

Austria echoed this point from ICAN about the Secretary-General's view on the TPNW, which, as Austria said, was crafted to be complementary with other treaties. Austria pointed out that all TPNW states parties have been consistent champions of the NPT and have fulfilled their NPT obligations, unlike other non-TPNW states parties who have not done enough to implement the NPT. All serious commentators have confirmed the complementarity between the two instruments, said Austria, and bad faith arguments to the contrary must be challenged.

Chile, Costa Rica, Cuba, Djibouti, El Salvador, the Holy See, Malaysia, Mexico, Peru, Uruguay, the Organisation for the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons in Latin America and the Caribbean (OPANAL), Norwegian People's Aid, and Red de Seguridad Humana para América Latina y el Caribe (SEHLAC) also confirmed the complementarity between the TPNW, the NPT, the CTBT, and other agreements.



The Holy See noted that NWFZ treaties complement the TPNW by reducing the geographic scope of nuclear weapon proliferation and deterrence doctrines. OPANAL agreed the TPNW is complementary to NWFZ treaties and highlighted the memorandum of understandings between some of the zones as a way to strengthen bonds and facilitate interregional cooperation. SEHLAC also highlighted the TPNW's complementarity with the zones and called on all member of NWFZs that haven't yet joined the TPNW to do so as soon as possible.

Cuba said the TPNW also makes an effective contribution to general and complete disarmament and to international peace and security, while Uruguay said the TPNW promotes global and regional peace and security and strengthens the non-proliferation regime. Costa Rica **said** the TPNW "fills a vital gap" in the women, peace, and security agenda, complements existing environmental protection in the nuclear legal landscape, and is underpinned by international humanitarian law. "Because the Treaty's radical inclusivity addressing the gendered and environmental impacts of nuclear armament is rooted in humanitarian law, it is widely applicable and should garner international acceptance," said Costa Rica. A representative of the Catholic Archdiocese said the moral power of the TPNW is global and universal.

Djibouti thanked ICAN and the International Committee for the Red Cross for their work on advancing understandings of complementarity between the TPNW and other instruments.

### Future work

Malaysia asked the facilitators if they thought the Austrian proposal for a consultative process on security concerns of states under the TPNW could contribute to the workstream on complementarity, noting that addressing the security concerns reflected in the TPNW and demonstrating how the Treaty advances security is important. The Irish co-facilitator agreed there are synergies and linkages between these workstreams.

Mexico asked if the facilitators had plans to hold an event with NPT partners at the next Preparatory Committee. El Salvador supported this idea. The co-facilitators agreed it is important to continue dialogue and engagement with the NPT.

Switzerland said the complementarity between the TPNW and NPT should be evident in the way the 2MSP declaration refers to developments in relation to the NPT and CTBT. It also argued that one contribution to complementarity would be for all TPNW states parties to bring into force a Comprehensive Safeguards Agreement and Additional Protocol with the International Atomic Energy Agency.



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## Gender Provisions

Laura Varella | Reaching Critical Will of the Women's International League for Peace and Freedom

On 1 December, delegations discussed the work carried out by Chile, the gender focal point appointed for this intersessional period. This report provides highlights from the discussion and is not a comprehensive accounting of all views expressed.

### Presentation of the report

Chile initiated the discussion about gender and the TPNW by presenting the **report** of the work carried out during the intersessional period. Chile highlighted that **three informal meetings** were held with experts from academia and civil society, who provided important information for implementing the actions related to gender in the Vienna Action Plan.

Chile stressed that the majority of states parties have underscored the need for including gender perspectives in the work of the Treaty, and recognise the substantial contribution by women to disarmament and to the prevention and reduction of conflict. Chile reiterated that in order to bring about the elimination of nuclear weapons and to achieve nuclear disarmament, it is key to involve the participation and leadership of women in decision-making in the Treaty, as well as including gender perspective in all areas of implementation of the TPNW.

The focal point highlighted the presentations delivered during the informal meetings about the gendered impact of nuclear weapons, which among other things provided explanations of the effects of radiation in women's and girls' bodies. Chile said that assistance programmes for victims which are gender- and age-sensitive must be considered, and that the report also highlights the importance including gender perspectives in cooperation and international assistance. The focal point also called for collection and analysis and data breaking down by sex and age, adding that it is important to encourage incentives to states parties to promote best practices for exchanging such data.

**Aotearoa New Zealand**, Austria, El Salvador, and Ireland supported the recommendations put forward by the gender focal point. Uruguay expressed support for the report, saying it is balanced and represents various positions on the issue. It appreciated the reference to scientific evidence to promote recommendations. **Costa Rica** expressed appreciation for Chile's work and welcomed the intersessional work by states parties.

The **Women's International League for Peace and Freedom (WILPF)** thanked Chile for its role as gender focal point for the Treaty over the past year, and for the inclusive format of the meetings held. It welcomed the report and recommendations submitted by Chile to this meeting, including the recommendation to encourage the next focal point to conduct outreach to women from affected communities to deepen understanding on the differential impacts of nuclear weapons; the recommendation to examine how other disarmament-related treaties have integrated gender-sensitive guidelines and gender perspectives relating to victim assistance; and the recommendation to maintain and expand close cooperation with the Scientific Advisory Group.

### Gendered impacts

Costa Rica **reminded** that nuclear weapons are not gender-blind, and that women and girls are at a much higher risk of developing cancer than men or boys. It argued, "They are the ones who will give birth to children with drastic malformations, the ones who traditionally look after the ones with disabilities and



injuries, the ones who suffer the most from reproductive stigmas and the ones who will be labelled as ‘unmarriageable’ as a result, which in many parts of the world, implies a socioeconomic tragedy.” Costa Rica supported expanded cooperation with the Scientific Advisory Group to develop comprehensive insights into the impact of nuclear weapons on women and girls, also asking for this conference to work towards more gender diversity within the SAG.

Austria said it was happy that the TPNW recognises important closer consideration of the numerous dimensions of gender related to disarmament and non-proliferation. It said that a central element is the clear recognition and more work on the gendered effect of ionising radiation on women and girls.

Aotearoa New Zealand recognised the continued need to incorporate gender perspectives and gender-sensitive approaches to respond to the impacts of nuclear weapons. Ireland acknowledged the evidence about the gender impacts of nuclear weapons, and said that implementation will better enable states parties to develop gender sensitive cooperation and assistance, particularly medical care. Similarly, El Salvador said it is crucial to have greater visibility of the impact nuclear weapons have on different categories of people, including women and girls. It said that in order to elaborate differentiated responses, it is essential to base all work on scientific evidence.

Uruguay also highlighted the importance of taking into account and recognising the disproportionate consequences of nuclear weapons on women and girls. Honduras reminded that the TPNW is the only nuclear weapon-related Treaty that takes into account gender aspects. It said that the provisions that recognise the differentiated impacts, and the importance of women in the decision-making process, were negotiated for many years. It stressed that those are crucial factors to promote peace and security.

Kiribati encouraged continued discussion with a view towards developing recommendations for age- and gender-sensitive victim assistance and environmental remediation, cooperation and assistance. The Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC) said it views with interest the focus on the harmful consequences of nuclear weapons on women and girls. The Holy See underlined the differentiated impact of radiation on women and girls, and noted the need for further study on the factors that cause this impact in order to ensure women exposed to ionising radiation receive adequate care.

The **New Japan’s Women Association** underlined the unspeakable suffering endured by female Hibakusha from discrimination and stigma, having marriage and job opportunities denied, in addition of many of them experienced repeated miscarriages and stillbirth. The organisation highlighted the work carried out to urge Japan to become a party to the TPNW.

WILPF reminded that the effects of nuclear weapons go beyond radiation. Fire and blast also impact people disproportionately depending on how a society is structured—on how and where people live, who is responsible for childcare, who is at home and work, what foods are prepared and eaten, etc. Nuclear weapons also have social and economic impacts through the destruction of cities, communities, and ecologies. WILPF welcomed the Scientific Advisory Group’s recommendation for a UN study on the impacts of nuclear war and hoped these issues can be taken into account within that work.

## Participation

Costa Rica said it is imperative that states parties actively ensure the participation of women and girls from affected communities, Indigenous Peoples, young people, academia, and civil society organisations in these vital conversations while also continuing to implement the Vienna Action Plan. Kiribati said it will continue to advocate for the inclusion of women, including those of nuclear weapon-affected communities.

Aotearoa New Zealand supported the full, equal, meaningful, and effective participation and leadership of women in decision-making under the Treaty. El Salvador made similar remarks. Austria said that states must continue to ensure inclusion, representation, and recognition of gender in their negotiations.

WILPF said that while increasing women's participation is important, an intersectional approach, which recognises that groups of people are not monolithic but are informed by overlapping identities, is necessary to ensure that marginalised knowledges, perspectives, experiences, and expertise are included in nuclear disarmament discussions. In this spirit, WILPF stressed that it is important for states parties to encourage and facilitate diversity in terms of all genders, moving beyond a socially prescribed men-women binary, as well as diversity related to sexual orientation, race, class, age, disability, and more.

### **Gender perspectives**

Costa Rica stressed, "Nuclear weapons are incompatible with feminist policies, policies that many nuclear weapon states and nuclear weapon-endorsing states claim to promote. We highlight that the TPNW is, in turn, is a feminist treaty, as it does not separate security from justice and equality."

Costa Rica also said that "it is essential to raise awareness among all people about gender issues, making them aware of the effect of gender bias in security doctrines and the impacts of nuclear weapons on women, men, girls, and boys. The denuclearization and demilitarization agenda must be pursued through an intersectional approach."

Aotearoa New Zealand supported the incorporation of a gender perspective throughout the implementation of the Treaty, saying these are essential elements in the process to achieve the total elimination of nuclear weapons and the achievement of full nuclear disarmament. Similarly, Ireland said it is a long-time advocate for mainstreaming gender perspectives and encouraged all member states to utilise this opportunity to revitalise efforts towards greater equality participation and strengthen gender perspectives in the work of the Treaty. Uruguay also expressed support for including gender perspective in all items of the disarmament agenda.

Austria encouraged continued work on gendered language and conceptualisation of nuclear weapons and deterrence, saying that it is essential to understand their influence in patterns of thinking and unwillingness to engage in objective evaluations of security.

WILPF likewise said that TPNW states parties also need to also examine the gendered and racialised nature of the discourse and thought about nuclear weapons, noting, "Incorporating the perspectives of marginalised groups and affected communities in discussions and policymaking can help challenge ideas that are treated as immutable truths and can articulate alternative conceptions of strength and security that are relevant for decisions of TPNW states parties." In this sense, WILPF said that it would be useful for the intersessional work on shaping narratives and arguments against nuclear deterrence, to be coordinated by Austria, to engage with feminist, LGBTQ+, and racial justice theories and practices, among others.

### **Opposing views**

Some speakers opposed some of the gender references put forward by the focal point in his report and with progressive understandings of gender. Kiribati stressed that it views gender as "natural men and women, natural female and male." The DRC said that the "issue of gender is limited to men and women," and that there should not be an inclusion of controversial or non-consensus language on gender in the documents elaborate within the Treaty. The Holy See similarly stressed that it considers gender as male

and female biological identities. It also said that attempts of some briefers to the meetings organised by the gender focal point during the intersessional period to “reinterpret” gender risks jeopardising the implementation of the Treaty and diverting attention away from the real needs of women and girls exposed to radiation.

The Holy See also expressed serious concern that while the report outlines some latest scientific findings regarding the disproportionate impacts of nuclear weapons, it also contains “highly problematic elements” that depart from the original approach of the TPNW. According to the Holy See, this includes undefined language on gender, the use of non-legal terms referring to victims in the context of assistance, divisive language about medical care, and reference to a non-negotiated text produced by the UN. In light of this, it said it could not support the recommendations put forward by the focal point.

## Organisational Matters and Closing

Laura Varella | Reaching Critical Will of the Women’s International League for Peace and Freedom

On Friday, 1 December, delegations discussed organisational matters and made closing remarks. This report provides highlights from the discussion and is not a comprehensive accounting of all views expressed.

### Political Declaration

After several informal consultations held throughout the week, the Second Meeting of States Parties adopted by consensus the **Political Declaration**, “Our commitment to upholding the prohibition of nuclear weapons and averting their catastrophic consequences.” States parties also adopted by consensus the **report** of the meeting, including a series of **decisions** that were put forward by the President.

The President of 2MSP said he was pleased with the declaration, saying the document will send a strong message reaffirming that states parties are united, that they reaffirm their commitment to the prohibition of nuclear weapons, and that they are determined to make progress in implementing the Treaty.

Austria expressed appreciation for the adoption of a very strong political declaration, especially given the global state of affairs, the fragile-looking nuclear taboo, and unacceptable nuclear threats being made.

Cuba said the political declaration not only gives continuity to the Vienna Action Plan and Declaration, but also reaffirms the unity and the commitment of states parties to the Treaty to ensure the total elimination of nuclear weapons in a transparent, verifiable, and irreversible fashion.

South Africa welcomed the adoption of the political declaration, agreeing it sends a strong message on the TPNW and humanitarian consequences of nuclear weapons, and highlighting that it expresses concerns on the increasing reliance of states on nuclear weapons, the increasing salience of nuclear weapons in military postures and doctrines, the use or threat of use of nuclear weapons, and the modernisation and increase of stockpiles of nuclear weapons.

Kiribati said it was pleased with both the declaration and the decisions, especially decisions three and four. Namibia also welcomed the declaration.

The Philippines supported the extension of the intersessional structure, emphasising the importance of the working groups. It also welcomed the option for Presidents to convene thematic debates, as well as the endorsement of the voluntary reporting guidelines on Articles 6 and 7 and the support for discussions on the feasibility of an international trust fund for victim assistance and environmental remediation. The Philippines also acknowledged with approval the establishment of a consultative process on security concerns with Austria as the coordinator.

The International Campaign to Abolish Nuclear Weapons (ICAN) said that the declaration sends an unambiguous and powerful message to the world that nuclear weapons are a source of great—and increasing—insecurity in the world, and can never be seen as a legitimate means of defence. ICAN also underlined that the declaration “exposes the dangerous and morally disgraceful fallacy of ‘nuclear deterrence,’ which for too long has been used to justify the indefinite retention of these earth-endangering devices—thus exposing all of us to unacceptable risk. Not only does nuclear deterrence theory undermine non-proliferation efforts; it also obstructs much-needed progress towards disarmament.”

### **Humanitarian impacts of nuclear weapons**

The President said that statements throughout 2MSP made clear the serious concerns all states share about the devastating humanitarian consequences of nuclear weapons, stressing that this is a risk hovering over all of humankind. For this reason, it is increasingly clear that the TPNW is the most fitting multilateral instrument available to achieve the total elimination of nuclear weapons by prohibiting those weapons, he added. The President also highlighted that this was the first time that a plenary meeting at UN headquarters in New York focused on the humanitarian consequences of nuclear weapons, and thanked all those involved.

Austria welcomed the decision of scheduling the thematic debates, which anchored the whole meeting in the facts and scientific evidence on the humanitarian consequences and risk of nuclear weapons.

The International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC) said the meeting showed progress will continue towards a world free of nuclear weapons when the humanitarian impact of these weapons is put at the centre of discourse.

### **Inclusivity**

The President appreciated the valuable contribution of international organisations and of civil society, including youth and affected communities, saying that their viewpoints and proposals have been crucial for anchoring the implementation of the Treaty and making it a tangible reality.

Kazakhstan said the ICRC, ICAN, and representatives of non-governmental organisations played an important role in building demand for urgent action to advance nuclear disarmament negotiations. Kazakhstan said it was inspired by the interventions of civil society groups, mainly the youth, and also by testimonies from the affected by nuclear testing communities. It said that it had decided to hold the 3MSP in New York because of the large presence of civil society there.

Austria thanked the inclusive and vibrant contributions from affected communities, non-governmental organisations, experts and all participating states. Ireland, Namibia, and Thailand thanked civil society for their engagement in the meeting. Kiribati thanked the ICRC, ICAN, and civil society for their work.

The Philippines expressed gratitude to the ICRC, and the invaluable contributions and proactive engagement of NGOs, civil society organisations, particularly the youth groups, adding that their

dedication has been instrumental in making 2MSP a success. Aotearoa New Zealand echoed the appreciation for the work of ICAN, ICRC, and civil society organisations.

ICAN said that more than 700 civil society representatives have been present this week, and that ICAN and its partners have held 65 events—from panel discussions and roundtables to musical performances, art exhibitions, film screenings and investor events—in order to engage new audiences and build support for the Treaty. ICAN attached great value to the participation of atomic bomb survivors from Hiroshima and Nagasaki, as well as those from communities harmed by nuclear testing in Australia, Kazakhstan, Kiribati, Maohi Nui, the Marshall Islands, and the United States.

### **Scientific Advisory Group**

The President said that one of the milestones of the meeting was the creation and the work of the Scientific Advisory Group (SAG). He said that is the first time that a scientific group has been part of a multilateral treaty on nuclear weapons, and that states are setting a precedent of incalculable value. He stressed that scientific evidence on the catastrophic fallout of nuclear weapons is not open to subjective interpretation, and that the scientific arguments that were introduced in the room give a strong argument to the ethical and social imperative to eliminate these types of inhuman weapons urgently.

Kazakhstan commended the SAG for having produced in record time two parallel reports informing states of developments in scientific and technical fields relevant to the Treaty, including the implementation of Article 4 of the treaty, humanitarian consequences, and risks associated with nuclear weapons. Kazakhstan said it looks forward to the SAG's continuing work, including on the impacts of a nuclear war and incorporating recommendations made this week.

Austria thanked the SAG for its important contributions. South Africa said it looks forward to working with delegations, with the support of the SAG, relevant international institutions, and other stakeholders, to continue to take forward the mandate of the Treaty. The Philippines appreciated the evidence-based policymaking and the role of the SAG in strengthening the Treaty's implementation. Aotearoa New Zealand, Djibouti, and Thailand also thanked the work of the Group.

### **Third Meeting of States Parties**

The meeting adopted a decision to hold the Third Meeting of States Parties (3MSP) under the Presidency of Kazakhstan in New York in the week of 3 March 2025. Kazakhstan said that “will leave no stone unturned to fulfil the high responsibility assigned to us” and that it will coordinate and continue to work in an inclusive and transparent manner.

Aotearoa New Zealand, Austria, Cuba, Djibouti, Ireland, Kiribati, Malaysia, Namibia, Nigeria, Philippines, South Africa, and Thailand congratulated Kazakhstan on the election to preside over the 3MSP and said they are looking forward to the meeting.

Kiribati expressed hope that the 3MSP will make progress in establishing the international trust fund.



# 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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Reaching Critical Will



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