

Nuclear risk reduction, nonproliferation & disarmament: The role of parliamentarians

Nuclear threats

Nuclear threats are rising due to uncertainty about nuclear policies under the new US administration, unresolved conflicts between Russia and NATO/European Union, and increased tensions in North East Asia and South Asia.

There are 15,000 nuclear weapons remaining in the arsenals of the nuclear-armed States. Nearly 1600 of these are primed and ready to be fired within minutes under launch-on-warning policies. In addition, both Russia and NATO retain the option of using nuclear weapons first in a conflict – increasing the tensions between these two military power blocs.

There have already been at least 15 times when a nuclear exchange nearly occurred through conflict escalation, miscommunications, and/or faulty information in the nuclear command and control systems.

Recent research indicates that there is an additional risk of cyber attack by a terrorist organisation or other third party on nuclear command and control systems, which could trigger an inadvertent nuclear exchange.

As a result, the Bulletin of Atomic Scientists in January 2017 moved the hands of the Doomsday Clock to 2.5 minutes to Midnight – the closest it has been since the Cuban Missile Crisis.

Doomsday Clock: 2.5 Minutes to Midnight



"This year's Clock deliberations felt more urgent than usual...as fake news was on the rise, and words were used by a president-elect of the United States in cavalier and often reckless ways to address the twin threats of nuclear weapons and climate change."

Rachel Bronson, Publisher of Bulletin of the Atomic Scientists

Move the nuclear weapons money

A HANDBOOK FOR CIVIL SOCIETY AND LEGISLATORS



Over \$100 billion per year is spent on nuclear weapons and their delivery vehicles. These funds are sorely needed for social and environmental needs, including addressing climate change and meeting the Sustainable Development Goals.

Indeed, the United Nations Charter requires the Security Council to adopt a disarmament plan in order to free up resources for social and economic need.

At the 135th IPU Assembly in Geneva, PNND launched a handbook 'Move the Nuclear Weapons Money' which included initiatives of legislators in both nuclear armed and non-nuclear countries to reduce nuclear weapons budgets and curtail investments in nuclear weapons corporations.

Nuclear risk reduction measures: Non-proliferation and disarmament negotiations

Non-Proliferation Treaty: May 2-13, 2017

The Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty (NPT) is the cornerstone of the nuclear non-proliferation regime. Under the NPT, non-nuclear states accept safeguards on their nuclear energy facilities and agree not to acquire nuclear weapons. In return the nuclear-armed States agree to pursue comprehensive nuclear disarmament.

In 2010, the nuclear-armed States agreed to a range of nuclear risk-reduction and disarmament measures. But since then they have made little progress on implementing this agreement. The NPT meeting in May this year will provide an opportunity to encourage the nuclear-armed States to adopt more specific commitments, including timelines for the implementation of these measures.

Nuclear ban treaty negotiations: June 15 - July 7, 2017

In 2010, States Parties to the NPT also agreed that 'All States should make special efforts to build the framework for a nuclear-weapon-free world.' As such, a majority of non-nuclear states have agreed to commence negotiations in 2017 on a legal agreement to prohibit nuclear weapons leading to their elimination. The first negotiation session took place from Mar 27-31 at the United Nations in New York. The next sessions will be from June 15 – July 7, 2017.

Joining these negotiations is voluntary, and the negotiated treaty will only apply to those States that sign and ratify it. One NATO country (Netherlands) has joined the non-nuclear States in the negotiations. No nuclear armed States have joined.

2018 UN High Level Conference

The UN General Assembly has also decided to hold a *High Level Conference on Nuclear Disarmament* in 2018. This follows successful UN high level conferences in 2015 and 2016 on sustainable development at which the Sustainable Development Goals were adopted, on climate change at which the Paris Agreement on Climate Change was adopted, and on migrants and refugees at which the New York Declaration on Refugees and Migrants was adopted.

Like-minded governments, parliamentarians and civil society are hoping that the *2018 UN High Level Conference on Nuclear Disarmament* could achieve similarly significant agreements on nuclear risk-reduction and disarmament.

What can parliamentarians do?

1. Call on your government to support nuclear risk reduction and disarmament measures at the 2017 NPT Prep Com, joining the nuclear ban treaty negotiations, and participating in the 2018 UN High Level Conference at the highest level (head of government);
2. Participate in the NPT Prep Com, ban treaty negotiations or UN High Level Conference. Contact PNND for details.
3. Join mayors, religious leaders and other parliamentarians in endorsing 'A Nuclear-Weapon-Free World: Our Common Good.' Visit www.pnnd.org for details.
4. Join Parliamentarians for Nuclear Non-proliferation and Disarmament (PNND).