

Intervention of Mr. Rob van Riet
on behalf of
Parliamentarians for Nuclear Non-proliferation and Disarmament

130th IPU Assembly, General Debate, 19 March 2014

Thank you Mr. President.

Distinguished Delegates,
Ladies and Gentlemen,

Let me start by pointing out that contrary to what the list of speakers indicates, I am not Mr. Alyn Ware. Mr. Ware could not be here, so I will be speaking on behalf of Parliamentarians for Nuclear Non-proliferation and Disarmament – PNND, abbreviated.

My name is Rob van Riet and I serve as Coordinator of PNND in the United Kingdom.

I would like to firstly thank the Inter-Parliamentary Union for this opportunity to address this Plenary Session.

PNND is a network of over 700 parliamentarians from around the world. Different from the IPU, our members are individual members of parliament – as opposed to national parliaments. Like the IPU delegations, however, our members come from across the political spectrum. What binds them is an interest in nuclear non-proliferation and disarmament issues.

PNND facilitates discussion on these issues through organizing events, hearings and workshops. Our network also assists parliamentarians in taking action on achieving non-proliferation and disarmament goals. We also aim to bring the critical parliamentary dimension to key international nuclear disarmament processes, notably at the United Nations. This includes the organization of panel discussions and gatherings at NPT Review Conferences and Preparatory Committees, but also engagement with more novel initiatives, such as the UN Open Ended Working Group on Taking Forward Multilateral Negotiations on Nuclear Disarmament and the International Day for the Total Elimination of Nuclear Weapons on September 26th, as designated by UN General Assembly Resolution 68/32.

We have been honoured to assist and collaborate with the IPU on bringing a parliamentary focus to nuclear non-proliferation and disarmament issues.

The IPU has recognized that parliamentarians have a key role to play in making progress on these issues.

Since the IPU adopted the resolution “Advancing nuclear non-proliferation and disarmament and securing the entry into force of the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban-Treaty: The role of parliaments” in April 2009, PNND and IPU have collaborated on a range of initiatives,

including a high-level panel convened by the IPU Committee on UN Affairs in October 2011, several side-events examining the implementation of that resolution, and the production of a Handbook to support parliamentarians in advancing non-proliferation and disarmament.

The Handbook highlights existing examples of best policies and practice in the field of non-proliferation and disarmament and offers practical recommendations for action. The Handbook was released in October 2012 in English and French, and has subsequently been translated into Spanish and Russian. We continue our efforts to get the Handbook translated in additional key languages.

We have been heartened to see that parliamentarians from around the world have taken the Handbook forward. Some of them are in this room now.

We are equally delighted by the forthcoming adoption of the Resolution “Towards a Nuclear-Weapon-Free World: The Contribution of Parliaments”. It confirms that this issue is high on the parliamentary agenda. We are ready to assist parliamentarians in implementing the Resolution to its fullest extent.

To this end, we will organize an event tomorrow at 1PM, which will examine how the Resolution can be taken forward. You are invited to join us.

Let me use this opportunity to thank Mr. Saber Chowdhury, whose support as President of the Standing Committee on Peace and International Security has been critical to the success of these efforts.

We would also like to congratulate Mr. Gregory Schneeman on his election as President of this Committee. We look forward to working together on advancing these important issues.

Let me conclude by noting that against the backdrop of the IPU’s 125-yearlong existence, our collaboration is relatively new. Although new, it has proven to be fruitful. We are delighted and honoured to continue to assist the IPU on bringing the parliamentary dimension to nuclear non-proliferation and disarmament issues.

Thank you.