

**PARLIAMENTARY ACTION PLAN FOR NUCLEAR-RISK REDUCTION AND ACHIEVING A
NUCLEAR-WEAPON-FREE WORLD**

3 April 2017, Dhaka Bangladesh

13:00-14:00, Windy Town Room: Banghobundho International Conference Center

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Good afternoon everyone,

I would like to thank Parliamentarians for Nuclear Non-Proliferation and Disarmament for the invitation to address such a pressing topic for the international community. We have recently witnessed declarations of world leaders that seem to contradict international efforts towards nuclear disarmament. Most prominently, the President of the United States recently declared that his country “must be top of the pack in nuclear capability”. Therefore, efforts to achieve a nuclear-weapon-free world are more important than ever.

This panel will try to address the role of parliaments in reducing nuclear risk and achieving a nuclear-weapon-free world. I will divide my intervention into three main sections: first, I will comment on the multilateral negotiations that are currently taking place at the United Nations on a treaty to prohibit nuclear weapons; I will then address the developments of the review cycle for the Nuclear Non-proliferation Treaty (NPT); and lastly I will follow-up on the resolution of the IPU adopted in 2014, entitled *Toward a Nuclear Weapon Free World: The Contribution of Parliaments* and offer some concluding remarks on the duty of parliaments to work in coordination with governments to foster nuclear disarmament.

Turning to the first issue, multilateral negotiations for a treaty on the absolute proscription of nuclear weapons, I would like to offer some background information

to understand how these negotiations came about. In 2013, the General Assembly decided to establish a first *Open-Ended Working Group on Taking Forward Multilateral Nuclear Disarmament Negotiations*, which developed concrete legal measures for the achievement of a nuclear weapon free world. Subsequently, in 2016, the General Assembly adopted a resolution introduced by Mexico to re-establish the Open-Ended Working Group, to undertake substantive work on these measures and pave the way for the negotiations of a treaty.

The “second OEWG” culminated its mandate on 26 August of 2016, when it presented its final report to the General Assembly. Based on the recommendation contained in paragraph 67 of the OEWG’s report, the General Assembly of the adopted resolution A/RES/71/258 on 23 December 2016, which is entitled “*Taking forward multilateral nuclear disarmament negotiations*”. This resolution decided to convene a United Nations conference to negotiate a legally binding instrument to prohibit nuclear weapons, leading towards their total elimination, held from 27 to 31 March and from 15 June to 7 July 2017. Subsequently, a High-Level Conference on Nuclear Disarmament will take place in 2018 to assess progress and take further action on multilateral nuclear disarmament.

It is important to recall, however, that the resolution was adopted by 113 affirmative votes, 35 against, and 13 abstentions. Notably, four of the five nuclear NPT nuclear weapon States (the United States, the Russian Federation, the United Kingdom, and France) voted against the resolution, and the remaining one (China) abstained. Several other States that belong to collective security organizations also voted against.

The negotiations towards a prohibition treaty are taking place in a relevant historic moment, which allows me to address the developments regarding the NPT review conference. As you are all aware, in accordance with article VIII, the NPT can be reviewed every five years. To this date, there have been nine review conferences, but only five have produced an agreed outcome (1975, 1985, 1995, 2000, 2010). Therefore, the review process cannot succeed without a strong leadership and a coordinated work of the international community

The next review conference is scheduled for 2020, and among other topics, it will address the future of nuclear disarmament. The preparatory committee for the 2020 review conference will hold its first session from 2 to 12 May, 2017. I would like to emphasize the importance of these developments in the context of the ongoing negotiations on a prohibition treaty. There are conflicting views among members of the international community regarding the future of nuclear disarmament negotiations.

Some States, which can be identified as “opposing States” consider that this is not the right time to outlaw nuclear weapons, that it is not realistic to ban them when other States (such as North Korea) are developing them. This group is led by the United States and the United Kingdom. Another group of States –which in my view have the correct approach— believe that a nuclear ban treaty will not substitute the regime created under the NPT, but rather, will make the regime stronger. States in this category include Mexico, Brazil, ASEAN States, Nigeria, South Africa, Ireland, Austria, among others. These States consider that by setting out a clear commitment regarding the actual elimination of nuclear weapons, the treaty would translate the

so-far elusive obligation contained in Article VI¹ of the NPT into legally-binding action.

At this point, it is important to recall that during the three conferences on the humanitarian impact of nuclear weapons Oslo (March 2013), Nayarit (March 2014) and Vienna (December 2014), the international community recognized that the impact of a nuclear weapon detonation, irrespective of the cause, would not be constrained by national borders and could have global consequences, causing destruction, death, displacement, long-term damage to the environment, to human health and well-being, to socioeconomic development, and social order and could even threaten the survival of humankind.

Although currently 115 States belong to Nuclear-Weapon-Free Zones: (33 States to the Treaty of Tlatelolco, 13 States to the Treaty of Rarotonga, 10 States to the Bangkok Treaty, 53 to the Treaty of Pelindaba, 5 to the Treaty of Semipalatinsk, and Mongolia), the nuclear threat remains very real. So long as nuclear weapons continue to exist, the threat they pose to humanity – whether through intentional use or accidental – remains unacceptably high. The NPT, while being a landmark international treaty, has not been able to further the goals of nuclear disarmament and general and complete disarmament.

Bearing this context in mind, I will now move on to the final section of my intervention, which consists of a follow-up on the IPU's resolution "*Toward a Nuclear Weapon Free World: The Contribution of Parliaments*", adopted during the 130th

¹ Article VI-- Each of the Parties to the Treaty undertakes to pursue negotiations in good faith on effective measures relating to cessation of the nuclear arms race at an early date and to nuclear disarmament, and on a treaty on general and complete disarmament under strict and effective international control.

Assembly in 2014. The resolution, as I am sure you recall, supports nuclear weapon free zones, calls for the elimination of the role of nuclear weapons in security doctrines, supports negotiations for a nuclear weapons convention and calls on parliaments to commemorate the International Day for the Total Elimination of Nuclear Weapons. It is very relevant to note that the resolution was supported by *all* parliamentary delegations, including those from nuclear-weapon States and their allies.

So, what is the role of parliamentarians to engage in the national and multilateral processes to reduce nuclear risks and adopt a nuclear-weapon-free-world? I believe that in this precise moment, our role is critical. Parliaments and parliamentarians, as officials who represent the expression of the hopes and aspirations of citizens, have a crucial responsibility to protect the world and its future generations. As parliamentarians, we should continue to undertake measures that complement and reinforce those taken by the Executive. We should actively engage with civil society and hold our governments accountable to the achievement of a nuclear-weapons-free-world. As the international organization of parliaments, the IPU should continue to be involved in the topic, perhaps through the introduction of a new resolution during one of the next Assemblies. We must continue to bear in mind that the possession of nuclear weapons, which are linked with the threat of their use, is fundamentally incompatible with humanity's common aspirations for peace and security.

Thank you.