

JOINT STATEMENT FROM CIVIL SOCIETY TO THE STATES PARTIES OF THE NUCLEAR NON-PROLIFERATION TREATY

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As the world mobilises in response to the deadly COVID-19 pandemic, we cannot afford to lose sight of the other global challenges that threaten all of us, including the worsening planetary climate emergency and the ongoing threat of catastrophic nuclear war. These are all, in the words of former UN Secretary-General Kofi Annan, “problems without passports”.¹

The scale of the global crisis caused by this pandemic is due to multiple political failures. Time and again, governments and other actors have ignored and dismissed the warnings made by scientists throughout the world about transnational threats and the steps necessary to prevent and/or mitigate the effects. In the case of COVID-19, those warnings were ignored for too long and now it is too late.

We’re not only at a pivotal point in the struggle against the fast-moving coronavirus; we are also at a tipping point in the long-running effort to reduce the threat of nuclear war and eliminate nuclear weapons.

Tensions between the world’s nuclear-armed states are rising; the risk of nuclear use is growing; billions of dollars are being spent to replace and upgrade nuclear weapons; and key agreements that have kept nuclear competition in check are in serious jeopardy.

One of the many lessons to be learned from this global crisis is that science must not be ignored under the guise of “national security” policies that put profit before people and privilege the most powerful.

As we approach the solemn 75th anniversary of the atomic bombings by the United States of the cities of Hiroshima and Nagasaki, and mark the 25th anniversary of the package of decisions that led to the indefinite extension of the nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty (NPT), we are also facing postponement of the 2020 NPT Review Conference. It is in this context that the civil society organisations endorsing this statement put forward the following three key messages to NPT states parties:

1. Global support for the NPT is strong, but its long-term viability cannot be taken for granted.

It is encouraging to see that all countries have expressed support for the NPT, including in recent UN Security Council meetings. However, the Treaty is only as strong as its implementation. The longer that consensus-based NPT Review Conference decisions remain unimplemented, the less weight the Treaty and its obligations will have. For the long-term viability of the NPT, all countries must fully implement their obligations. The body of previous NPT Review Conference commitments and action steps still apply. This includes the benchmarks agreed to at the historic 1995 Review and Extension Conference and

¹ Mr. Annan’s closing remarks at the 2013 Skoll World Forum on Social Entrepreneurship, 12 April 2013, <https://www.kofiannanfoundation.org/speeches/the-courage-to-change/>.

further commitments made at the 2000 and 2010 Review Conferences. These remain largely unfulfilled, and some are at risk of being reversed or lost entirely, such as the New Strategic Arms Reduction Treaty.

2. The grave state of global affairs and the rising risk of nuclear conflict and arms racing requires new and bolder leadership from responsible states.

Implementing past action plans must be the floor and not the ceiling for taking forward the NPT's provisions. The risk of nuclear weapon use is all too high and is growing, particularly as offensive cyber operations and artificial intelligence introduce unprecedented uncertainty into the global security environment. It is this environment that demands bolder action from all states to reduce nuclear risks by eliminating nuclear weapons; action that is rooted in "deep concern at the catastrophic humanitarian consequences of any use of nuclear weapons". Many countries have demonstrated their commitment to nuclear disarmament by joining the Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons (TPNW). The TPNW is a major contribution to the common goal of eliminating the threat of nuclear war and eliminating nuclear weapons.

3. Those that resist change also say the "environment" is not right for further progress, but responsible actors everywhere are rising to the challenge.

The world cannot wait until the environment is "right" for disarmament. It is true that success in conflict prevention and resolution, control of non-nuclear military capabilities, protection of human rights, climate and environmental protection, and other important endeavors would help to facilitate nuclear disarmament. But taking action for disarmament by negotiating agreements or through unilateral steps helps create an environment for achievement of a world free of nuclear weapons while building a climate of mutual trust that will positively contribute to solving the world's other pressing problems.

The postponement of the 2020 NPT Review Conference offers an unprecedented opportunity to change the current course, move beyond bitter politicisation, and focus efforts to bring about the end of nuclear weapons.

The 89 undersigned organisations call on NPT states parties and the international community to utilise this additional time wisely. The current situation requires new and bolder leadership from responsible states to work together to build majority support for a plan of action to advance NPT Article VI goals and create much needed momentum for further progress on disarmament, and to save humanity from the scourge of nuclear war.

More in-depth analysis and recommendations for NPT states parties' consideration over the next few months is provided following the list of endorsing organizations, to help in preparation for the Review Conference and to advance nuclear disarmament and non-proliferation.

ENDORISING ORGANISATIONS:

Act Church of Sweden (www.svenskakyrkan.se/act/international)

Amplify (www.amplifyyouth.org)

ANT-Hiroshima (www.ant-hiroshima.org/en)

Arms Control Association (www.armscontrol.org)

Basel Peace Office (www.baselpeaceoffice.org)

Blue Banner (www.peaceportal.org)

Campaign for Peace, Disarmament and Common Security (www.cpdcs.org)
Canadian Network to Abolish Nuclear Weapons (www.cnanw.ca)
Canadian Pugwash Group (www.pugwashgroup.ca)
Canadian Voice of Women for Peace (www.vowpeace.org)
Center for International Security and Policy (www.cisp-astana.kz/en)
Center for Peace and Public Integrity, Hanshin University (www.hs.ac.kr/sites/kor/index.do)
Chernobyl-Hibakusha Support Kansai (<http://wakasa-net.sakura.ne.jp/che>)
Church and Peace (www.church-and-peace.org)
Citizens' Nuclear Information Center (www.cnlic.jp/english)
Colombian Campaign to Ban Landmines (www.colombiasinminas.org)
Concerned Citizens for Nuclear Safety (www.nuclearactive.org)
Council of Churches in the Netherlands (www.raadvanckerken.nl)
FEMIN Women's Democratic Club (www.jca.apc.org/femin)
Global Action to Prevent War and Armed Conflict (www.globalactionpw.org)
Ground Zero Center for Nonviolence Action (www.gzcenter.org)
Hereford Peace Council
Hidankyo (Japan Confederation of A- and H-Bomb Sufferers Organization
(www.ne.jp/asahi/hidankyo/nihon/english)
Hiroshima Alliance for Nuclear Weapons Abolition (www.e-hanwa.org)
Hiroshima Prefectural Confederation of A-bomb Sufferers organizations
Human Rights Now (www.hrn.or.jp/eng)
Human Survival Project (<https://www.facebook.com/Human-Survival-Project-388802504634024>)
International Campaign to Abolish Nuclear Weapons (www.icanw.org)
International Fellowship of Reconciliation (www.ifor.org)
International Peace Research Institute, Meiji Gakuin University (PRIME) (www.meijigakuin.ac.jp/~prime)
International Physicians for the Prevention of Nuclear War (www.ippnw.org)
International Physicians for the Prevention of Nuclear War Canada (www.ippnwcanada.ca)
Israeli Disarmament Movement (<https://www.facebook.com/RPMISRAEL/>)
Japan Association of Lawyers Against Nuclear Arms (JALANA) (www.hankaku-j.org/english.html)
Japan Congress Against A and H-Bombs (GENSUIKIN) (www.gensuikin.org/english)
Japan Council against Atomic and Hydrogen Bombs (Gensuikyo) (www.antiatom.org/GSKY/en)
Japanese Liaison Council of Second-Generation Atomic Bomb Survivors (<http://www.c-able.ne.jp/~hibaku2/>)
Kakuwaka Hiroshima (www.kakuwakahiroshima.jimdosite.com)
Kerk en Vrede (www.kerkenvrede.nl)
Lawyers Committee on Nuclear Policy (www.lcnp.org)
Mayors for Peace (www.mayorsforpeace.org/english)
Mennonites Netherlands (www.dgwereldwerk.nl)
Middle East Treaty Organization (www.wmd-free.me)
Muslim Peace Fellowship (www.mpf21.wordpress.com)
Nagasaki Youth Delegation 8th (<https://www.recna.nagasaki-u.ac.jp/recna/nagasaki-youth-delegation>)
New Japan Women's Association (Shinfujin) (www.shinfujin.gr.jp/english)
NO DU Hiroshima Project

Nuclear Age Peace Foundation (www.wagingpeace.org)
Nuclear Watch New Mexico (www.nukewatch.org)
Nuclear Watch South (www.nonukesyall.org)
NVMP Physicians for Peace /International Physicals for the Prevention of Nuclear War Netherlands
(www.nvmp.org)
PAX (www.paxforpeace.nl)
Pax Christ USA (www.paxchristiusa.org)
Pax Christi International (www.paxchristi.net)
Pax Christi Northern California (www.paxchristinorcal.org)
Pax Christi Scotland (www.paxchristiscotland.org)
PEAC Institute (www.peacinstitute.org)
Peace Action (www.peaceaction.org)
Peace Boat (www.peaceboat.org/english)
Peace Depot, Inc. Japan (www.peacedepot.org/en)
Peace SOS (www.peacesos.nl)
People for Nuclear Disarmament (www.pndnsw.org.au)
People's Solidarity for Participatory Democracy (PSPD) (www.peoplepower21.org/English)
Portsmouth/Piketon Residents for Environmental Safety and Security (PRESS)
Pressenza International Press Agency (www.pressenza.com)
Project Ploughshares (www.ploughshares.ca)
Proposition One Committee (www.prop1.org)
Pugwash Japan (www.pugwashjapan.jp)
Pugwash Netherlands (www.pugwash.nl)
Rotarians 4 Nuclear Ban
Rotary Action Group for Peace Nuke Free Planet (www.rotarians.peacinstitute.org/about)
Savannah River Site Watch (www.srswatch.org)
Science for Peace (www.scienceforpeace.ca)
Soka Gakkai International (www.sgi.org)
The Simons Foundation Canada (www.thesimonsfoundation.ca)
Tri-Valley CAREs (www.trivalleycares.org)
Tribunal for Peace (www.tribunaalvoordevrede.nl)
UK Campaign for Nuclear Disarmament (cnduk.org)
Union of Concerned Scientists (www.ucsusa.org)
United for Peace and Justice (USA) (www.unitedforpeace.org)
US Fellowship of Reconciliation-USA (www.forusa.org)
Western States Legal Foundation (www.wslfweb.org)
Women's International League for Peace and Freedom (WILPF) (www.wilpf.org)
Women's International League for Peace and Freedom US (www.wilpfus.org)
Working Group Inclusive Security Netherlands (www.samenveilig.earth)
World Beyond War (www.WorldBeyondWar.org)
World Federalist Movement of Japan (www.wfm-igp.org/wfm-of-japan)
World Future Council (www.worldfuturecouncil.org)
YWCA of Japan (www.ywca.or.jp/english)

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I. THE TIME TO ACT IS NOW

The year 2020 marks 75 years since the United States dropped atomic bombs on Hiroshima and Nagasaki. By the end of 1945 more than 210,000 people—mainly civilians—were dead. The surviving atomic bomb victims (Hibakusha), their children, and grandchildren continue to suffer from physical and psychological effects of the bombings, as do people from the Korean peninsula who were among the victims of the atomic bombings.

From their development, through testing and use, nuclear weapons create victims at all stages. Indigenous peoples have been especially impacted by nuclear testing and uranium mining, and radiation has disproportionate gendered impacts. The damage caused by nuclear weapons has no national borders.²

The two bombs dropped on Hiroshima and Nagasaki were tiny and crude by today's standards. Current capabilities are even more deadly. Moreover, reductions of nuclear weapons have tapered off in the last several years, replaced by a lavishly funded new race to develop novel and diversified capabilities to unleash nuclear violence. In 2010, NPT states parties agreed by consensus to reduce the role of nuclear weapons in security strategies. Ten years later the opposite is true: that role has been expanded—and not only by nuclear-armed states but also by their complicit allies—the “nuclear umbrella” states.

The race to develop weapons more suitable for warfighting, including so-called low-yield systems, increasingly threatens the nearly 75-year-old taboo against nuclear use. Referring to any warheads as “low-yield” is a misnomer: available plans indicate these weapons would have roughly one-third the yield of the Hiroshima bomb. In some nuclear-armed states the resurgence of formerly retired types of weapons appears to be a result of corporate pressure rather than of strategic interest.

New risks heighten the urgency to eliminate nuclear weapons. Emerging technologies including offensive cyber capabilities and artificial intelligence combined with nuclear modernisation plans also increase risk. The scale and tempo of war games by nuclear-armed states and their allies, including nuclear drills, is

² A “limited” nuclear war, as one caused by 100 Hiroshima-sized nuclear weapons detonated in cities between India and Pakistan, would not only cause several million deaths and injuries, but the debris that rises to the atmosphere will reduce the temperature in the biosphere, affecting the production of staple grains -rice, wheat, corn and soy- resulting in a famine of 2 billion people worldwide, most from economically-challenged countries. The scarcity of food supplies and the ensuing speculation will increase the likelihood of armed conflicts and of a full-scale nuclear war which, aside from killing dozens of millions of people, will generate a nuclear winter through which many species, maybe even our own, will become extinct.

increasing. Ongoing missile tests, and frequent close encounters between military forces of nuclear-armed states exacerbate nuclear dangers.

As we approach the 75th anniversary of the bombings, the time for excuses and unfulfilled promises is over.

We call on the nuclear-armed states to halt programmes designed to build new nuclear weapons, new delivery systems, or their key components. Coupled with policy decisions eradicating launch-on-warning plans, ending modernisation programmes could start reducing risks, as would eliminating the role of nuclear weapons from national and regional security strategies and doctrines. Completely eliminating the risk of nuclear weapons is only possible when the weapons themselves are eliminated. All NPT states parties should commit to halting the development of new nuclear weapon capabilities and help stop the nuclear arms race, including by ceasing the provision of any form of assistance or encouragement to develop new capabilities.

States should better prioritise initiatives such as studies into the health impacts on second generation Hibakusha, and prevention of discrimination against survivors. We remind states that it is a common responsibility of the international community to guarantee the human rights of the survivors who continue to suffer even today, and to take action to ensure that such suffering will never be repeated. Provision of appropriate medical, economic and social assistance to victims of the use or testing of nuclear weapons is the responsibility of the international community.

Education on the humanitarian consequences of nuclear weapons should be further promoted worldwide as a core component of disarmament and non-proliferation education, and support should be given to youth initiatives, such as the United Nations' Youth4Disarmament programme, as one example.

II. THE TOOLS AND FRAMEWORKS EXIST, BUT IMPLEMENTATION IS LACKING

The NPT is not simply a non-proliferation treaty. It is also a treaty that requires action on disarmament. Twenty-five years ago today, NPT states parties agreed to key benchmarks at the historic 1995 Review and Extension Conference, including the commitment to the "complete elimination of nuclear weapons." Further commitments were made at the 2000 and 2010 Review Conferences.

The 1995, 2000, and 2010 commitments with few exceptions remain relevant and important, but they have largely been unfulfilled. They should now be reaffirmed and implemented in good faith. These commitments represent a collective determination of how to comply with Article VI. Abandoning or undercutting them would represent a lack of respect for the NPT process and cast doubt on the value of new commitments or the process itself.

Although not all the commitments represent unique means of fulfilling NPT Article VI, some are closely intertwined with the legal obligation. This is true of the NPT 2000 Review Conference commitment to achieve the entry into force of the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty and the "unequivocal undertaking by the nuclear-weapon States to accomplish the total elimination of their nuclear arsenals," as well as the related 2010 commitment "to undertake further efforts to reduce and ultimately eliminate all types of nuclear weapons, deployed and non-deployed."

Unfortunately, the nuclear-armed states parties to the NPT are moving in the wrong direction with respect to these and other Article VI commitments.

New START and the INF Treaty

In particular, the recent failure of the United States and Russia to resolve their dispute over compliance with the Intermediate-Range Nuclear Forces (INF) Treaty has opened the door to arms racing in a new arena.

Both countries have also failed to begin discussions on extension of the New Strategic Arms Reduction Treaty (New START), which is due to expire in 2021. Failure to extend New START, the last remaining treaty limiting the world's two largest and most deadly nuclear arsenals, would clear the path to unconstrained build-up of long-range nuclear arms.

A decision to extend New START by five years would open the way for US and Russian leaders to launch follow-on talks aimed at achieving further cuts in all types of nuclear weapons—both shorter-range and longer-range. Progress on a new trilateral arms control deal involving the United States, Russia, and China, however, is very unlikely before the end of this year. Preserving New START would also create a much more favourable environment for the pursuit of multilateral nuclear disarmament.

NPT states parties should declare in the strongest possible terms their support for an immediate five-year extension of New START, which would provide a stable setting for more far-reaching negotiations, and call upon all other nuclear-armed states to cap the size of their nuclear arsenals while further U.S.-Russian nuclear reductions proceed.

The implementation of other instruments complements and bolsters the NPT

The full implementation of the NPT and all its articles require additional legal instruments.

More than 25 years ago, the world's nations came together to ban nuclear testing by negotiating and opening for signature the Comprehensive Nuclear Test Ban Treaty (CTBT). The CTBT has established a powerful norm against nuclear test explosions and an effective global monitoring system to detect and deter nuclear tests. Nevertheless, the Treaty has not formally entered into force because eight states, including six parties to the NPT, have failed to ratify it. In particular, the United States and China have failed, without a defensible explanation, to ratify the treaty and fulfill their Article VI responsibility to do so. If NPT states parties are serious about strengthening the NPT, they must prioritise the ratification of the CTBT. The most effective way to resolve concerns about the potential for very low-yield nuclear explosions and enforce compliance with the CTBT is for the United States, China, and the other CTBT hold-out states to ratify the treaty and help bring it into force. When it does, states have the option to demand intrusive, short-notice on-site inspections.

The achievement of the obligations outlined in Article VI is facilitated by a legally binding norm to prohibit nuclear weapons, since otherwise a world free of nuclear weapons can neither be achieved nor maintained. The most recent multilateral instrument in the nuclear non-proliferation and disarmament toolbox is the Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons (TPNW). The TPNW unequivocally endorses and supports the NPT and is an opportunity to further NPT Article VI commitments. The TPNW further strengthens the non-proliferation norm enshrined in the NPT, by legally obliging its state parties to keep

in place their safeguards obligations at the time of entry- into- force, and should a state not already have a safeguards agreement in force, it would be required to negotiate one.

As a whole and in its preamble, the TPNW is a powerful statement of the moral, political, and legal norms—including international humanitarian and human rights law—that should drive the abolition of nuclear weapons. We have heard the criticism that the TPNW is divisive, but we find this assertion distracts attention from the larger, more profound way that the threat of nuclear annihilation divides humanity into those with the ability to threaten mass extinction and those who live under this threat.

Regional issues require cooperation

The Middle East

Another very serious threat facing the NPT is the recent failure of the United States to meet its sanctions relief commitments under the 2015 Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action (JCPOA), and the retaliatory steps taken by Iran to exceed key limits on its nuclear program. The JCPOA remains a crucial instrument to address serious concerns about Iran’s nuclear capacity and its potential to produce bomb-grade nuclear material. Further US efforts to undermine the agreement through extraterritorial sanctions or the re-imposition of UN sanctions on Iran will make a durable, long-term solution far more difficult to achieve.

NPT states parties should support full implementation of the agreement and should call on the United States and Iran to return to compliance with their JCPOA obligations immediately. This would open the way for follow-on negotiations on a potential win-win agreement that builds upon the JCPOA and sets new standards for non-proliferation and disarmament for the region, that would contribute to the goal of a nuclear and weapons of mass destruction (WMD)-free zone in the Middle East. In the meantime, it is important that Iran cooperate with ongoing International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) efforts to verify compliance with its safeguards obligations.

NPT states parties are urged to work more constructively toward an inclusive, sustainable dialogue on a WMD-free zone in the Middle East, and to refrain from exploiting this issue for unrelated purposes. The [outcome](#) of the November 2019 Conference on the Establishment of a Middle East Zone Free of Nuclear Weapons and Other Weapons of Mass Destruction should be welcomed by all states parties as a contribution to build upon. To help advance progress and improve the conditions for multilateral negotiation on such a zone, we call on each of the states in the region to undertake concrete measures consistent with other such zones and with the NPT itself, such as refraining from the acquisition or operation of sensitive nuclear fuel cycle technologies, signing and ratifying the CTBT, the Chemical Weapons Convention, the Biological Weapons Convention, the TPNW, and the Additional Protocol to their IAEA nuclear safeguards agreements.

Northeast Asia

Another essential step to preserve and strengthen the global non-proliferation and disarmament system is the successful negotiation of a verifiable, durable, diplomatic agreement on “peace and denuclearisation” on the Korean peninsula that permanently halts, reverses, and eventually eliminates the Democratic People’s Republic of Korea (DPRK)’s growing nuclear weapons and missile capabilities, ends the Korean war, and permanently removes all nuclear weapons from the Korean peninsula. Despite the historic summit in Singapore in 2018, US and DPRK leaders are not on the same page about the end goals, pace, and sequencing of the years-long technical and political process to “denuclearise” the Korean

peninsula. Talks are stalled, tensions are again rising, and DPRK is threatening to resume nuclear and long-range missile testing.

Rather than issuing yet another ineffective joint statement criticizing the DPRK's actions, NPT states parties should aim to be more constructive and point to effective solutions. They could, for example, express support for a pragmatic action-for-action diplomatic strategy, beginning with an interim deal to halt DPRK nuclear and missile testing, halt the production of nuclear material and warheads, and the missiles that can carry them.

NPT states parties should also note that these important steps, and other more substantial denuclearisation actions such as the irreversible dismantlement of key DPRK production and testing facilities, are not possible without reciprocal moves on the part of the United States, the Republic of Korea, and the international community. Reciprocal steps could include some combination of partial and phased easing of sanctions; effective humanitarian assistance; mutual security guarantees including non-use of nuclear weapons; a joint statement on the end of the Korean War and formal negotiations on a peace treaty to replace the Korean War Armistice; steps toward the normalisation of US-DPRK relations; concrete progress toward implementation of NPT Article VI and suspending military exercises; and reducing military deployments on both sides of the demilitarised zone (DMZ) in a manner consistent with a future peace treaty.

Other states in the region are urged to actively contribute to this process and begin consultations on establishing a lasting security mechanism in the entire region, including a nuclear-weapons free zone (NWFZ) in Northeast Asia. This year marks the 70th anniversary of the beginning of the Korean War and now is the time to take the steps necessary to formally bring an end to the state of war and to realise a nuclear- weapons- free Korean peninsula.

Europe and nuclear sharing

To maintain control over and reduce nuclear weapon risks, it is logical to keep nuclear weapons on one's own territory. While this is largely the case, up to 180 United States nuclear gravity bombs continue to be forward deployed in Belgium, Germany, Italy, the Netherlands, and Turkey. Although technically non-nuclear weapon states under the NPT, these countries have special responsibilities regarding nuclear disarmament. In all but one of these countries, their own military personnel train to receive control over nuclear weapons. Just as states agreed that the conclusion of the CTBT requires a new understanding of the NPT's article V, the agreements and interpretations built on the NPT's article I and article II require a new understanding of forward deployment. It is simply unacceptable to continue as is.

The five NPT-recognised nuclear-armed states are not alone in bearing responsibility for reducing the role of nuclear weapons in security strategies. There are at least two dozen other states complicit in propping up nuclear weapon legitimacy. The countries under the shadow of nuclear umbrella continue to encourage the ongoing possession of nuclear weapons. This is deeply contradictory to efforts to reduce and eliminate nuclear weapons.

III. HOW OTHER ACTORS ARE RISING TO THE CHALLENGE

While the ultimate responsibility to disarm lies with nuclear-armed states and their allies, other actors are mobilising in a diversity of ways that will compel disarmament and move toward the elimination of

nuclear weapons. Civil society actors are proud of their contributions to this goal and we present some initiatives here³ to demonstrate our commitment to the goals of the NPT—but also to show that we will no longer accept the status quo.

Parliamentarians have an obligation to look out for the best interests of their society, most certainly including the risks posed by nuclear weapons. Overwhelmingly, parliaments have been delegitimising nuclear weapons and demanding attention to the means and materials that build long-term sustainable societies. Many legislators have been active proponents of nuclear disarmament, the NPT, and other related agreements. The [Inter-Parliamentary Union](#) (IPU) has adopted two consensus resolutions on nuclear disarmament, one of which focuses on securing the entry into force of the CTBT. As outlined in an [Action Plan](#) developed by the IPU and Parliamentarians for Nuclear Non-proliferation and Disarmament (PNND), parliamentarians have roles to play in the NPT review cycles including by promoting the implementation of key elements agreed in 1995, 2000, and 2010.

Over one thousand parliamentarians across the globe have [pledged](#) their support for the TPNW, and countless resolutions or motions have demonstrated overwhelming support for urgent action towards a nuclear weapon free world. Whether through budget oversight or promoting treaty ratification, parliaments are taking action promoting the end of nuclear weapons.

Cities are the primary targets of nuclear weapon use. In the blink of an eye, a nuclear bomb can incinerate a city. Mayors are primarily responsible for public safety. As such, they have a special responsibility to their constituents to speak out against nuclear weapons. In 2018, the United Nations announced that 55 per cent of the world’s population lives in urban areas, a proportion that is expected to increase to 68 per cent by 2050. When governments fail to act nationally, cities are on the frontlines, taking the lead in promoting real solutions to the problems they face.

Municipalities around the globe are mobilising in support of nuclear disarmament. For example, [Mayors for Peace](#), with members in over 7,900 cities in 163 countries, advocates for the elimination of nuclear weapons and safe and resilient cities as indispensable measures to achieve lasting world peace. The [Cities Appeal](#) of the International Campaign to Abolish Nuclear Weapons (ICAN) calls on national governments to sign and ratify the TPNW. It has been supported by hundreds of cities worldwide, including major capitals and is endorsed by the Mayors for Peace network. Dozens of US cities have adopted resolutions supporting the [Back from the Brink Campaign](#), which makes specific calls on the US government in relation to nuclear disarmament and risk reduction. A growing number of cities in countries around the world are divesting their pension funds from nuclear weapons makers.

Most nuclear-armed states rely on **private companies** for the production, maintenance, and modernisation of their nuclear weapons. Publicly available [documentation](#) shows that private companies are involved in the nuclear arsenals of, at least, France, India, Israel, the United Kingdom and the United States. When financial institutions invest in companies associated with nuclear weapon production, they

³ This section identifies some specific organisations and initiatives in order to provide examples. It would not be possible to capture in a few pages the full scope of contributions that have been made by diverse individuals, organisations, professional networks, and constituencies over the last several decades toward nuclear disarmament. We encourage readers to visit the websites of endorsing organisations or to [view past statements](#) from civil society delivered at NPT conferences to learn more.

provide the financing to maintain, refurbish, test, and modernise nuclear weapons. In short: no money means no production. Investments are not neutral. Financing and investment are active choices, based on a clear assessment of a company and its plans. Global markets are changing, and significant financial actors are avoiding investments in companies that produce controversial weapons or their key components-- weapons which cannot be used without causing indiscriminate harm or violating international humanitarian principles. A number of major weapons producers have announced an [end to the production](#) of some types of indiscriminate weapons because they did not want to be removed from investor portfolios.

There is also a growing norm among states that financing or investing in companies that produce controversial weapons is a form of assistance with the production of those weapons. As signatories to the TPNW grow, and the treaty will soon enter into force, it is likely that many investors will exclude the companies behind the bomb, forcing them to change their business practices to protect their bottom line.

The [importance of diversity](#) among those participating in discussions about nuclear disarmament and non-proliferation is slowly being recognised. After decades of this field being dominated by men, particularly straight, cisgender men of the global north, certain disarmament-related forums have begun to encourage participation of women in debates and negotiations. During this NPT review cycle, several side events have been held and respective Chair's summaries have highlighted the importance of the full and effective participation of women in the work of the NPT. However, discussions about diversity have stopped short of the crux of the issue.

The demand for [women's participation](#)—while necessary and welcome—is insufficient for truly making change in weapons policy. Nuclear disarmament requires new understandings, perspectives, and approaches to nuclear weapons. This requires the effective and meaningful participation of all those who have been marginalised in the nuclear debate, including non-Western, non-white, and non-cisgendered or heteronormative people; survivors of nuclear weapons use, testing, and production; and people at a socioeconomic disadvantage and with disabilities. Diversity is not just about including women, especially women who come from the same or similar backgrounds as the men who already rule the table. It's about completely resetting the table; or even throwing out the table and setting up entirely new ways of working.

For decades, non-governmental organisations and **medical professionals**, including the [International Physicians for the Prevention of Nuclear War](#) (IPPNW), recipient of the 1985 Nobel Peace Prize, have worked tirelessly through research, campaigning, and lobbying to generate awareness about the impact of these weapons on humankind. The World Health Organization (WHO) stated in 1984 that “Nuclear weapons constitute the greatest immediate threat to the health and welfare of mankind” and the World Medical Association (WMA) stated in 2018 that “that even a limited nuclear war would bring about immense human suffering and substantial death toll together with catastrophic effects on the earth's ecosystem”.

The average age of the **Hibakusha** is now more than 82 years. The Hibakusha have continued to appeal for “No More Hibakusha,” so that no future generations will have to experience the living hell they suffered through. They call for the realisation of a world free from nuclear weapons in their lifetimes and have attended meetings of the NPT for decades, to bring this message of personal loss and to fulfill Article

VI obligations. The [Hibakusha Appeal](#), which calls for all states to join the TPNW, has now been supported by the signatures of more than 10 million people worldwide.

Faith communities across the globe recognise the fearfulness that has driven nations to take up arms against threats to their security, but have collectively chosen to face that fear not with additional posturing or intimidation but with continued action for a world based on trust, compassion and equality and belief that peacebuilding requires courage, resilience and imagination.

In November 2019, Pope Francis [visited Nagasaki and Hiroshima](#), and declared that both the use and the possession of nuclear weapons are immoral. Breaking away from security policies based on the intimidation of nuclear weapons is both a humanitarian and a moral demand. Further, it is also consistent with the purpose of the founding of the United Nations 75 years ago—to never repeat the scourge of war. Pope Francis’ pronouncement is in keeping with the [views and beliefs of other major faith traditions](#), in particular their shared emphasis on the sanctity of life, the principle of unity, and shared security. His declaration is rooted in a broader necessary paradigm shift from accepting the existential threat to humanity that nuclear weapons pose to adopting a universal ethic of nonviolence to counter the profoundly destructive spiritual impact and pervasive menace of nuclear weapons.

Young people are tired of cleaning up the messes older generations left for them. It should not be their responsibility to make governments take action to save the planet from climate change or nuclear weapons. But the leaders who stubbornly cling to weapons of mass murder and refuse to implement policies to save nations from drowning leave young people no choice. They will speak [clear-headed truth](#) to the few countries that keep nuclear weapons in spite of their devastating humanitarian and environmental consequences. Older generations must heed their call.

IV. CONCLUSION

To achieve the elimination of nuclear weapons and a global society that is more fair, peaceful and ecologically sustainable, we will need to move from the irrational fear-based ideology of deterrence to the rational fear of an eventual nuclear weapon use, whether by accident, miscalculation, or design. We will also need to stimulate a rational hope that security can be redefined in humanitarian and ecologically sustainable terms that will lead to the elimination of nuclear weapons and dramatic demilitarisation, freeing up tremendous resources desperately needed to address universal human needs and protect the environment.

The global impact of the recent COVID-19 pandemic illustrates that nuclear weapons have no place in the world. As the executive secretary of the Comprehensive-Nuclear-Test Ban Treaty Organization (CTBTO), Dr. Lassina Zerbo, recently wrote, the tragedy of COVID-19 “has thrown a stark light on the need for preparedness. The threat of nuclear weapons cannot await a similar crisis. The only option is prevention,” because “nuclear weapons leave no curve to be flattened.”⁴

⁴ Dr. Lassina Zerbo, “Nuclear weapons leave no curve to flatten,” *Kyodo News*, 12 April 2020, <https://english.kyodonews.net/news/2020/04/5661822b3b47-opinion-nuclear-weapons-leave-no-curve-to-flatten.html>.

Scientists issued grave warnings for decades of the potential for a massive global pandemic, and they were ignored. We've all suffered significant losses as a result. Once again, science and society are ringing the alarm on nuclear weapons. The global pandemic has revealed our unpreparedness to deal with catastrophe on a large scale. Recovery from a nuclear war would be impossible.⁵ The only sensible path is prevention.

⁵ The destruction caused by nuclear weapons is multi-dimensional. Cities become inaccessible and uninhabitable for long periods of time, and the atrocious effects of acute and chronic radiation will affect survivors throughout their lives and their progeny. There is no possibility of recovery or first response, as most healthcare workers will have died, most hospitals, clinics and communication infrastructure will have been destroyed, and radiation will make it impossible for external first responders to aid the victims of a nuclear detonation. Victims will be left to suffer and die alone. Moreover, a high-altitude electromagnetic pulse (HEMP) will disrupt electrical devices in a radius far greater than the physical devastation caused by the nuclear detonation, causing the breakdown of automobiles, computers, telephones, the Internet, and telecommunications.