A BAN IS COMING
ICAN REPORT ON THE MAY SESSION OF THE 2016 UN WORKING GROUP ON NUCLEAR DISARMAMENT
Time to start work on a ban

Beatrice Fihn
Executive Director, ICAN

It is now clear beyond doubt that the overwhelming majority of the world’s nations are ready to start negotiations on a treaty banning nuclear weapons. They are motivated to do so out of a deep concern for the safety and security of their own citizens, and of humanity as a whole. By putting in place a ban, they hope to stimulate much-needed progress towards the total elimination of nuclear forces.

ICAN – a global campaign coalition with partner organizations in close to 100 countries – contributed actively to the May session of the 2016 UN working group on nuclear disarmament in Geneva, where the proposal to start work on a global ban on nuclear weapons was the focus of debate.

This report summarizes our activities there and brings together many of the statements that our campaigners delivered. We hope to convey to the reader a sense of the unstoppable momentum that is now behind this fast-growing humanitarian-based initiative to outlaw nuclear weapons.

ICAN is working hard to expand and strengthen its global network of campaigners as we gear up for the likely launch of negotiations in 2017. We have partner organizations in nuclear-armed states, in “nuclear umbrella” states, and in the nuclear-free states of Africa, Latin America, Asia and the Pacific. We work with religious communities, with parliamentarians, with trade unions, and with national Red Cross and Red Crescent societies.

ICAN’s delegates at the May session hailed from 38 countries: Albania, Argentina, Australia, Austria, Belgium, Burundi, Canada, Costa Rica, the Democratic Republic of the Congo, Ethiopia, Finland, France, Germany, Guatemala, Indonesia, Italy, Japan, Kenya, Macedonia, Malaysia, Mexico, Nepal, the Netherlands, Nigeria, Norway, the Philippines, Romania, Senegal, Serbia, South Africa, Sri Lanka, Sweden, Switzerland, Tanzania, and many more.

More and more governments are raising their voices in support of a ban, and declaring their readiness and determination to begin long-overdue negotiations.
Uganda, the United Kingdom, the United States and Zambia.

All over the world, people are eager to ensure that their governments seize this historic opportunity to outlaw nuclear weapons once and for all.

The new treaty will greatly strengthen the global norm against the use and possession of nuclear weapons, clarifying that the international community views these as unacceptable weapons. It will also have very concrete and practical implications, including by curtailing the global financing of nuclear weapon production and assisting the victims and survivors of nuclear weapon detonations.

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Through public pressure, and the pressure of other nations, we are confident that they will join the international mainstream in rejecting nuclear weapons.

At the May session of the working group, governments engaged for the first time in detailed discussions on what they would like to see included in the new treaty. They called for prohibitions on the development, production, modernization, testing, acquisition, stockpiling, transfer, deployment, stationing, threat of use and use of nuclear weapons, as well as prohibitions on assistance, financing, encouragement and inducement of these acts. They called, too, for victim assistance provisions and the establishment of an agency tasked with promoting implementation of the treaty.

Despite the compelling presentations from experts on the huge risks inherent in the continued possession of nuclear weapons and the fallibility of “deterrence”, a few states took the floor to defend nuclear weapons as an integral part of their security arrangements. This prompted others to ask: If nuclear weapons are so necessary for your security, why not for ours? Why should every nation not possess nuclear weapons or claim protection from a “nuclear umbrella”?

Most nations agree that nuclear weapons only undermine security – for those who possess them, and for everyone else. And it is for this reason that most nations are united behind the proposal for a new legal instrument prohibiting nuclear weapons, to be pursued even without the participation of nuclear-armed states. In one working paper, Argentina, Brazil, Costa Rica, Ecuador, Guatemala, Indonesia, Malaysia, Mexico, the Philippines and Zambia propose that the first negotiating conference for the treaty be convened in 2017.

The working group will reconvene in August for its third and final session, at which it will prepare a report to be submitted to the UN General Assembly in September. Whatever recommendations the report may ultimately contain, it is clear that a majority of states are ready to begin work now on a treaty banning nuclear weapons. They will not allow this opportunity to slip away. We, as civil society, look forward to working alongside them in this vital endeavour.

Finally, let me thank our many generous donors, without whom our participation in the working group would not have been possible. They include Heinrich-Böll-Stiftung, the Irish Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade, Soka Gakkai International, the République et Canton de Genève, the Norwegian Ministry of Foreign Affairs, the Centre Accueil Genève Internationale, and ICAN Norway.
A head of the May session, ICAN held a two-day campaign meeting in Geneva, bringing together more than 130 activists from 38 countries. Participants discussed strategies for effective advocacy in nuclear-free states, “nuclear umbrella” states and nuclear-armed states.

The programme included interactive workshops on nuclear weapon modernization programmes, the elements for a treaty banning nuclear weapons, common misconceptions about a ban and counter-arguments, and the humanitarian consequences of nuclear weapon detonations.

Speakers included Hiroshima mayor Kazumi Matsui and atomic bomb survivor Setsuko Thurlow. Ron McCoy, a Malaysian physician, opened the meeting by describing the genesis of ICAN. Our launch in 2007 had been prompted by the failure, two years earlier, of an NPT review conference, and we had been greatly inspired by the tremendous success of the International Campaign to Ban Landmines.
Towards a negotiating process

We are under no illusion that the pathway forward will be an easy one. But we are convinced that real progress can – and must – be made in the months ahead. The consequence of continued inaction is potential catastrophe. The nuclear-weapon-free states, who constitute the overwhelming majority, will be pivotal in driving us towards our destination.

Three years ago in Oslo, 128 states gathered for the first-ever conference on the humanitarian impact of nuclear weapons. It was a dire warning against complacency, a wake-up call to humanity. International relief agencies advised that they would be utterly powerless to respond in the aftermath of even a single nuclear detonation – let alone a full-scale nuclear war.

A year later, in Nayarit, Mexico, 146 states gathered to carry forward this groundbreaking, fact-based discussion. And there, it became abundantly clear to all that the risk of a nuclear detonation today is as high as it has ever been – perhaps even higher.

At the end of 2014, 158 states gathered in Vienna for the third and final conference on this crucial topic. The main conclusion: a legal gap exists in the current regime governing nuclear weapons, and must be filled without delay. In the year and a half since the Vienna conference, a large majority of states have pledged to work together to ban these ultimate weapons of mass destruction.

The UN working group has now begun the important task of debating the elements to be included in the new treaty to fulfil this historic pledge. All but a small handful of states have participated actively in these fact-based discussions and pre-negotiations.

One speaker at the working group noted the absence of “important states” from the debate. But all states are important. This pervasive notion that certain states, and peoples, are more equal than others is precisely why we have, for so long, failed to achieve our goal. It is why colonial powers considered it acceptable to detonate 300 nuclear weapons in the Pacific, as the delegate of Palau so eloquently reminded us.

Eliminating nuclear weapons is a task for all states. All states have a duty – and a right – to work together towards this goal. The push for a treaty banning nuclear weapons is motivated by a fervent desire to ensure that no one else ever suffers from these most despicable weapons. Over the past three years, states have laid the groundwork for a successful negotiating process.

There is no compelling reason to continue delaying the prohibition of a weapon that is inherently immoral and manifestly inhumane. We therefore warmly welcome the proposal to convene the first negotiating conference in 2017 for a legal instrument prohibiting nuclear weapons.

These negotiations must be open to all states. They must include the voices of civil society. And they must be blockable by none.

They need not be overly complex and drawn-out. Other indiscriminate, inhumane weapons have already been banned through global treaties. The provisions in those treaties – as well as in nuclear-weapon-free zone treaties – should provide useful guidance to states in drafting the text.

It is time to get started. We have an historic opportunity to declare nuclear weapons illegal once and for all. Let us not squander it. Let us not wait for another Hiroshima or Nagasaki – or a calamity of even greater proportions – before we finally muster the political will to act.

OTHER INDICRIMINATE, INHUMANE WEAPONS HAVE ALREADY BEEN BANNED THROUGH GLOBAL TREATIES.
In the centre of the city, just below the detonation, several thousand grade seven and grade eight students from all of the city’s high schools were engaged in the task of clearing fire lanes. These young girls and boys were simply melted, vaporized and carbonized with the heat of 4,000°C.

Of a population of roughly 360,000 people – largely non-combatant women, children and elderly – most became victims of the indiscriminate massacre of one atomic bomb. The effects of the radiation are still killing survivors to this day.

Having lived through such an unprecedented catastrophe, we survivors became convinced of our mission of warning the world about the utterly unacceptable reality of these inhumane nuclear weapons. Thus, we have been calling for the total abolition of such devices of mass murder for the past seven decades.

Survivors of Hiroshima and Nagasaki, as well as victims of nuclear weapon testing, are dying away with the hope of “abolition in our lifetime” unfulfilled. For us, the past 70 years seemed like a never-ending struggle to advocate for disarmament. But we have never lost our conviction that only by eliminating nuclear weapons will human survival be possible.

And now the birth of the Humanitarian Initiative is like opening the door of hope for a new chapter of our struggle. And, for the world community, it has galvanized people’s energy and commitment. The initiative has reframed how we think and talk about nuclear weapons, and refocused our attention from the military doctrine of deterrence to the real impact of nuclear weapons, on all living beings and our environment.

We pray that the open-ended working group progresses productively so that it could set the stage for negotiations on a new legally binding instrument that prohibits nuclear weapons.

It is difficult to understand the probability of nuclear weapons use, whether by accident or design, but we do know that the probability is not zero. Understanding the consequences is not difficult – especially for us survivors. But even for those who survived, it is still unimaginable because of the exponential scale of the horror produced by modern nuclear weapons.

I am profoundly disturbed as a hibakusha that the Japanese government continues to defend and justify its nuclear umbrella. Domestically, our political leaders all repeat the same sentiment. They say: “As the only nation to have suffered nuclear bombs, we must be at the forefront in taking action for disarmament.” Yet, the US could not even send a representative to the working group. Where is the moral responsibility or leadership in that? We should all be working together to find a way to make disarmament a reality.

We hibakusha were moved by President Obama’s statement in Prague in 2009, when he said: “As the only nuclear power to have used a nuclear weapon, the United States has a moral responsibility to act.” Yet, the US could not even send a representative to the working group. Where is the moral responsibility or leadership in that? We should all be working together to find a way to make disarmament a reality.

A MORAL IMPERATIVE TO ACT

SEVENTY-ONE YEARS AGO, as a 13-year-old child, I survived the atomic bombing of Hiroshima. With a single blinding flash of light, the Hiroshima I remembered as my home, school and neighbourhood vanished from the face of the earth and turned to hell on earth. A bright summer morning turned into dark twilight, with smoke and dust rising in a mushroom cloud.

Dead and injured people were covering the ground. Some were made naked by the blast. They were bleeding, burned, blackened and swollen – unrecognizable as human beings. Parts of their bodies were missing, flesh and skin hanging from their bones, some with their eyeballs hanging in their hands, some with their stomachs burst open, with their intestines hanging out. Still to this day I can vividly remember this gruesome procession of ghostly figures.

Miraculously, I was rescued from the rubble of a collapsed building, which was about 1.8 kilometres from ground zero, but most of my classmates in the same room were burned alive.

In the centre of the city, just below the detonation, several thousand grade seven and grade eight students from all of the city's
During the May session of the working group, a small number of nations extolled the supposed “security value” of nuclear weapons and spoke out against a ban. ICAN, in addition to rebutting their specious arguments, held protests outside their diplomatic missions in Geneva. Five campaigners wore nuclear bomb outfits, while others carried banners reading, for instance, “Ban me! I’m immoral!” and “The ban is coming”.

One of the most outspoken defenders of the nuclear status quo is Canada, a member of NATO. It argued at the working group that there is no “legal gap” in the existing regime governing nuclear weapons. The Canadian mission, therefore, was the first stop on our protest route.

Norway was the next. A majority of Norwegian parliamentarians have called on the government to support a prohibition on nuclear weapons. But the government says that now is not the right time to commence negotiations.

We then visited the Japanese and Australian missions, which are side by side. Australia had a caretaker government, ahead of a national election, and officially neither supported nor opposed a ban at the working group. We called on it to embrace the ban.

At the Japanese mission, we chanted “Japan, support a ban!” Despite having suffered the horrific humanitarian consequences of nuclear weapons, Japan argues that US nuclear weapons are essential for its national security. Many Japanese media outlets attended the protests. Regrettably, the Japanese mission contacted the police, who held us for close to an hour and threatened to fine us for our peaceful demonstrations. Among the protesters were three atomic bomb survivors.

‘BAN ME, I’M IMMORAL!’

PEACEFUL PROTESTS AT GOVERNMENT MISSIONS

ICAN campaigners outside the Japanese mission in Geneva.
A T THE WORKING GROUP, a handful of states spoke out against the proposal for a treaty banning nuclear weapons. Notably, all were states that claim protection from the nuclear weapons of an ally. All were states that consider it acceptable, in certain circumstances, to employ these ultimate weapons of mass destruction – which have unavoidable catastrophic humanitarian consequences.

The true reasons for their opposition to a treaty banning nuclear weapons are rarely stated. They argue, disingenuously, that such a treaty will be ineffective in advancing nuclear disarmament, when, in truth, they understand very well its transformative potential. They understand that it will compel them to rule out any role for nuclear weapons in their military doctrines.

When negotiations on the treaty begin, these states in nuclear alliances will find it exceedingly difficult to stay away. Their parliaments will call upon them to participate. Their media will ask pointed questions. Their citizenry will rise up and demand a ban. Even in this pre-negotiation phase, debate has been raging in many of these states over their resistance to this effort.

In the Netherlands on 28 April, the parliament adopted a motion urging the government to pursue, at the working group, “the start of negotiations on a international ban on nuclear weapons”. Eighty-five per cent of Dutch citizens agree that nuclear weapons should be banned.

In early March, the majority of Norwegian parliamentarians voiced their support for “an international prohibition on nuclear weapons”. Seventy-seven per cent of Norwegian citizens stand behind this goal.

In Australia, the Labor party, which could form government in July, adopted a policy platform in 2015 firmly supporting the negotiation of a global treaty banning nuclear weapons. Eighty-four per cent of Australian citizens agree with that position.

The German public, too, is overwhelmingly supportive: 93 per cent of citizens want nuclear weapons to be banned, just as chemical and biological weapons have been banned; 85 per cent want US nuclear weapons removed from German soil.

In the world of disarmament diplomacy, it seems that we are suffering from a “democracy deficit”. It seems that the policies of certain states, as presented to the working group, do not properly reflect the will of the people or their elected representatives.

The so-called “progressive approach” to nuclear weapons, as championed by states in nuclear alliances, is neither progressive nor new. It is the step-by-step approach by another name. That approach has long failed to yield meaningful results. Simply restating past commitments will not take us any closer to a nuclear-weapon-free world.

While the co-sponsors of the “progressive approach” paper may endorse the ultimate goal of a nuclear-weapon-free world – as, indeed, do the nuclear-armed states – they have shown little willingness, as yet, to modify their own behaviour to help get there.

Four and a half decades after the Non-Proliferation Treaty entered into force, how can it be acceptable still to host nuclear weapons on one’s territory? How can it be acceptable still to participate in nuclear-war-planning activities? How can it be acceptable still to claim protection from a so-called “nuclear umbrella”?

These states in nuclear alliances are adept at recommending particular courses of action for nuclear-armed states to follow, but their own record on implementing article VI of the NPT leaves much to be desired. The precarious state of that treaty today is, to some degree, attributable to their inaction.

They urge us to focus on “common ground”, not “differences”. They warn of the “further fragmentation” of the international community – seemingly oblivious to the divisiveness of their own actions, not least of all the hosting of nuclear weapons.

After years of broken promises by nuclear-armed states, it would be futile, indeed reckless, to continue pursuing yet more lowest-common-denominator outcomes of the kind routinely brokered at NPT review conferences. Instead, states that favour nuclear disarmament must join forces to create strong new treaty-based norms.

Fierce resistance to a treaty banning nuclear weapons is inevitable. States with these weapons, and their allies, are intent on keeping them. They believe these weapons afford them prestige in international affairs. But that perception will soon change – when a ban is negotiated.
A focus on the human impact

Muhamad Sugiono
Universitas Gadjah Mada

The unique perspective of Setsuko Thurlow and other survivors of the nuclear attacks on Hiroshima and Nagasaki – as well as the survivors of nuclear testing – must continue to inform all disarmament deliberations.

We encourage the organizers of the proposed negotiating conference in 2017 for a treaty prohibiting nuclear weapons to consider how best to ensure that the views of victims and survivors are properly heard.

It is incumbent upon us all to ensure that no one else ever suffers as they have. Eliminating nuclear weapons is the only guarantee. We consider a nuclear-weapon-ban treaty as an essential first step towards this urgent goal.

The ban treaty – like other recent humanitarian-focused disarmament treaties – should include provisions on victim assistance. We strongly encourage states to examine that topic in further detail. The working group’s mandate includes discussing measures to increase awareness and understanding of the humanitarian consequences of nuclear weapons. This, in our view, is essential for advancing and achieving nuclear disarmament.

The three conferences on the humanitarian impact of nuclear weapons in 2013 and 2014 served as a dire warning to humanity. They laid bare the irrefutable scientific evidence that nuclear weapons are inherently inhumane, and must therefore be banned.

Mindful of the findings and conclusions of these landmark conferences, 127 nations have now endorsed the Humanitarian Pledge to fill the unacceptable “legal gap” in the current regime governing nuclear weapons.

We warmly welcome this strong commitment to act. Prohibiting nuclear weapons is the only responsible course of action in light of our newfound knowledge. Anything less than a total ban would be insufficient.

We support the proposal by Pacific island states for the establishment of an agency to promote implementation of the future treaty banning nuclear weapons, and for that agency to have a mandate to educate the public about the humanitarian harm these weapons inflict.

Indeed, the very process of negotiating the ban treaty and bringing it into force would itself serve an important educational function – generating public and parliamentary debate on this issue where it is presently lacking.

We note that many of the states at the working group have called for greater emphasis on disarmament education. But among them are states whose own commitment to disarmament has been less than satisfactory.

We urge all states that claim protection from nuclear weapons in their military doctrines to share information on the scenarios in which they envisage these ultimate weapons of mass destruction being employed on their behalf. What would be the impact of such use on human beings?

In addition, we call on those states that have permitted and helped carry out nuclear test explosions on their territory to provide information on the long-term impact of those explosions, in particular the impact on indigenous communities.

The catastrophic humanitarian consequences of the use of nuclear weapons invalidate all arguments that we hear in favour of their retention. Nuclear weapons, like all other weapons of mass destruction, must be banned.

We look forward to participating in the first negotiating conference towards that end.
The four leading international federations representing the world’s physicians, public health professionals and nurses came together for the first time ahead of the May session to warn governments that urgent action is needed to prohibit and eliminate nuclear weapons. A new treaty banning nuclear weapons, they said, would be “the only course of action commensurate with the existential danger they pose”.

The World Medical Association, the World Federation of Public Health Associations, the International Council of Nurses, and the International Physicians for the Prevention of Nuclear War submitted a joint working paper on the health and humanitarian case for banning nuclear weapons.

They emphasized that a nuclear war could kill many more people in a few hours than were killed during the entire Second World War, with the radioactive fallout lingering in the environment, causing cancers and other illnesses over generations.
For the Health of the Planet

Tilman Ruff
International Physicians for the Prevention of Nuclear War

The World Health Assembly is the global body of all health ministers or their most senior officials entrusted to safeguard the health of the population of every country in the world. When considering the first landmark World Health Organization report on the effects of nuclear war on health and health services in 1983, they concluded that “nuclear weapons constitute the greatest immediate threat to the health and welfare of mankind”. That was 33 years ago.

Responsible public policy needs to be firmly rooted in evidence. Yet this greatest immediate threat to humankind has long been denied, ignored and irresponsibly neglected.

It is extraordinary that the first time governments met for the specific purpose of considering the humanitarian impacts of nuclear weapons, in Oslo in 2013, was 68 years after nuclear weapons were detonated over the people of Hiroshima and Nagasaki.

It is inconsistent that the well-founded global concern about accelerating global warming is not paralleled by concern about the greatest risk of acute climate disruption – which is nuclear war. Especially with 795 million people in the world already chronically hungry now, it is remarkable that no government or group of governments has yet commissioned and made public a report from its national research organizations examining the effects on the food and water security and nutrition of its people from the climatic impacts of a nuclear war, even in a distant global region.

The findings of such studies would provide a compelling opportunity for education of the public and decision-makers, to galvanize preventive action. All governments can help cure the historical pathological denial by basing their policy and action on the evidence of what nuclear weapons actually do.

There is a relentless trend. The more we learn, the worse it looks – on the long-term effects of ionizing radiation, on the vulnerability of the global climate and food supply to long-term disruption from the smoke from burning cities, on the fragility of achievements in global health, development and wellbeing as we increasingly come up against Earth’s environmental limits.

Any use of nuclear weapons would invite retaliation and risk uncontrollable escalation. To risk nuclear war cannot protect anyone’s security. The evidence now clearly shows that nuclear war would be suicidal for any perpetrator state.

These are clearly most inconvenient truths for those who possess, rely on and thereby threaten to use the most indiscriminate and inhumane of all weapons. But given what we now know, to believe that nuclear weapons can serve security interests, that there can be a legitimate use for these weapons, that they can be retained without being used, that biological and chemical weapons should be banned but not nuclear weapons – these are dangerous delusions that risk planetary health.

Real understanding of what nuclear weapons actually do invalidates all arguments for their continued possession and requires that they urgently be prohibited and eliminated as the only course of action commensurate with the existential danger they pose.

The world’s leading global federations representing doctors, nurses and public health professionals worldwide, together with the International Physicians for the Prevention of Nuclear War – winner of the 1985 Nobel Peace Prize – submitted a paper to the open-ended working group.

In it, we argue that this is a global health imperative – an assessment based on the shared professional, ethical obligation of health professionals to care for and cure the sick, to prevent disease and suffering, and to base our practice in evidence. You trust us with the health of your citizens, your families, yourselves.

When your general practitioner, specialist, nurse and health department, with their colleagues around the world, speak with one voice regarding a grave threat to health, it would be wise to listen and heed their advice.

The historical evidence shows that for each kind of indiscriminate and inhumane weapon subject to a regime for their elimination, the establishment of an unequivocal norm of prohibition has preceded, enabled and been the basis for subsequent work towards the goal of elimination.

That is the proven, logical path. It is also the only feasible option at this time. Non-nuclear-weapon states cannot eliminate weapons they don’t own. But they can prohibit them, internationally and in domestic legislation. Banning and eliminating nuclear weapons is the only way to secure planetary health.
The international community cannot afford to delay any longer the prohibition of a weapon that is plainly unacceptable on humanitarian grounds.

As we have seen with biological weapons, chemical weapons, land mines and cluster munitions, the act of prohibition stimulates and accelerates progress towards elimination. Weapons that have been outlawed increasingly become seen as illegitimate.

They lose their political status and, along with it, the money and resources for their production, proliferation and perpetuation.

States have discussed a number of possible legal measures for advancing nuclear disarmament, with the idea of a nuclear-weapon-ban treaty emerging as the most feasible, most widely supported option for moving forward.

Such a treaty can – and must – be negotiated now, even without the participation of nuclear-armed states.

It will constitute an important initial step towards elimination. It need not include complex provisions relating to the destruction of nuclear stockpiles. Such provisions can be negotiated subsequently, in the form of protocols, once nuclear-armed states are willing to engage.

The treaty should prohibit not only the use and threat of use of nuclear weapons, but also their development, production, testing, acquisition, stockpiling, transfer and deployment, as well as assistance, financing, encouragement and inducement of these acts. It should close all loopholes in the existing regime governing nuclear weapons, including those that allow certain states to claim protection from an ally’s nuclear weapons.

We encourage states to discuss how the treaty should address fissile materials, delivery vehicles, the financing of nuclear weapon programmes, and non-explosive forms of nuclear testing. They should also discuss how the treaty could address the rights of victims and the impact of nuclear detonations on the environment.

A nuclear-weapon-ban treaty will strengthen the global norm against the use and possession of nuclear weapons. It will clarify that, in the view of the international community, nuclear weapons are unacceptable. It will be a tool with which parliamentarians, the media, non-governmental organizations and the general public can exert pressure on their governments to end reliance on nuclear weapons in their military doctrines.

Through prohibitions on the financing of nuclear weapons or their transit through the territory of a state party, the treaty will make it more difficult for states to retain and modernize their nuclear arsenals. More than any other proposal on the table, it has the potential to break through the decades-long logjam in disarmament negotiations, fundamentally altering the political dynamics and opening up new opportunities for progress.

ICAN warmly welcomes the various proposals submitted to the working group for the start of negotiations on a legally binding instrument prohibiting nuclear weapons.

We are confident that there is now a critical mass of support to ensure that such negotiations are successful.

We look forward to working alongside states at the first negotiating conference.
POLITICAL WILL

PARLIAMENTARIANS EMBRACE THE BAN

The active engagement of parliamentarians will be vital to the success of global efforts to outlaw and eliminate nuclear weapons. At an ICAN side event on 2 May, we presented the chair of the working group, Thai ambassador Thani Thongphakdi, with an ICAN appeal signed by 838 parliamentarians from 42 nations. In the appeal, they express their “deep concern at the continuing threat posed by many thousands of nuclear weapons across the globe”, and conclude that “the only way to guarantee that they will never be used again is to outlaw and eliminate them without further delay”.

They urge “all national governments to negotiate a treaty banning nuclear weapons”. Such a ban, they declare, is a humanitarian imperative of the highest order. “It is necessary, feasible and increasingly urgent.”

ICAN campaigners in many countries work closely with parliamentarians to help generate public debate and shape national policy positions on nuclear disarmament.

In April our partner organization PAX prompted a debate in the Dutch parliament on the need to ban nuclear weapons. A majority of parliamentarians voted “yes” to a motion urging the Dutch government to work internationally for a ban on nuclear weapons. This debate came about as a result of a petition campaign, led by PAX, that collected 45,608 signatures.

The foreign minister responded by promising to act upon the motion. PAX described it as “a highly significant step”.

In Norway, too, nuclear disarmament has been a hot topic of debate in the parliament. In March a majority of parliamentarians reiterated their call for the government to join international efforts to prohibit nuclear weapons.

Labour party leader Jonas Gahr Støre – a candidate for the prime ministership – said: “When a majority in parliament has expressed itself like that, then the government can rest assured that the parliament will pay close attention to whether this is what the government is doing.”
I can support the negotiation of a treaty with a broad range of prohibitions on nuclear weapons: prohibitions on their development, production, testing, acquisition, stockpiling, transfer, deployment, threat of use and use, and prohibitions on any assistance, financing, encouragement and inducement of these acts.

This list, however, is not meant as an exhaustive one. We are open-minded to the possibility of including additional prohibitions in the treaty. We strongly believe that the new instrument must reflect a “zero tolerance” approach to these worst weapons of mass destruction.

We propose the following principles to guide the negotiations on the scope of the prohibitions, with the aim of ensuring no loopholes remain.

Firstly, the treaty should forbid its parties from engaging in any activities that might facilitate improvements to the nuclear arsenals of any state.

Secondly, it should forbid its parties from contributing in any way to preparations for the possible use of nuclear weapons.

Thirdly, it should forbid its parties from conferring any legitimacy on nuclear weapons through their policies and practices. And, fourthly, it should forbid its parties from undermining in any other way progress towards the realization of a nuclear-weapon-free world.

We believe that there are several pertinent questions regarding the scope of the prohibitions that warrant further examination. For example, how can the treaty effectively prevent its parties from claiming protection from a so-called “nuclear umbrella”?

We note with deep regret that Australia, despite being a party to the South Pacific nuclear-free zone treaty, still claims protection from nuclear weapons in its military doctrines. The global treaty banning nuclear weapons should seek to abolish the construct of a nuclear umbrella.

The issue of the modernization of nuclear forces must also be discussed further. Would prohibitions on the development and production of nuclear weapons be adequate to prevent assistance with modernization work? How can the new treaty help stigmatize modernization programmes?

The forward deployment of US nuclear forces in Europe raises important questions for the negotiations of the treaty. Five NATO non-nuclear-weapon states – Belgium, Germany, Italy, the Netherlands and Turkey – still host nuclear weapons on their soil, despite being parties to the NPT.

Assuming that these states will join the ban treaty – would it be necessary that they have no nuclear weapons on their soil upon becoming parties? Or could they join the treaty, then do away with the weapons? Is it acceptable to return the weapons to the possessor state, or should we insist that they be dismantled within the host states?

The issue of the financing of nuclear weapon programmes also warrants further attention. How can the treaty banning nuclear weapons help stem the flow of money to such programmes?

Treaties relating to the financing of terrorism may include some useful provisions in this regard. (Terrorism, after all, is what we are debating here.)

As a number of delegations have proposed, the treaty could also prohibit the production of fissile material. A stand-alone treaty thus may prove unnecessary.

A number of delegations have also called for an explicit prohibition on sub-critical nuclear testing. This proposal we fully endorse. It would fill a significant gap in the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty.

We do not envisage that the ban treaty will initially include a complex verification mechanism relating to the destruction of stockpiles. However, some form of compliance mechanism may nevertheless be needed to ensure that parties adhere to the various prohibitions in the treaty.

How, for example, are we to ensure that states which formerly hosted nuclear weapons on their territory have in fact ended that prohibited practice?

I hope that these questions are useful as we approach the first negotiating conference in 2017 for the ban treaty.
A Rejection of Nuclear Weapons

Ray Acheson
Reaching Critical Will

A ban treaty should prohibit the use, development, production, stockpiling, transfer, acquisition and deployment of nuclear weapons, as well as assistance with these acts. A prohibition on assistance could explicitly include a prohibition on any form of financial or material support to public and private enterprises involved in nuclear weapon activities. Such a prohibition could increase the societal stigmatization of nuclear weapons and reduce the incentives for private companies to accept any work related to nuclear weapons.

It could also compel public funds and foundations to refrain from supporting any entity involved in nuclear weapon activities. In this regard, a treaty ban on nuclear weapons could raise the political and economic costs of maintaining and modernizing nuclear weapons.

We strongly agree with those nations that have called for the treaty to address victims’ rights. Examples of victim assistance and environmental remediation provisions can be found in other disarmament instruments.

Developing effective provisions for victim assistance in a nuclear-weapon-ban treaty will require an inclusive process in which victims and survivors of nuclear weapons, along with other stakeholders, work to frame legal responsibilities that can respond effectively to their diverse experiences.

We believe that the treaty need not set out provisions for elimination at the outset. The prohibitions provide the framework for elimination, but states possessing nuclear weapons will need to be engaged in the negotiation of disarmament procedures, verification measures and timeframes.

We do believe that a treaty banning nuclear weapons will help facilitate elimination even if the nuclear-armed states refuse to participate in the negotiations. A ban treaty would offer states opposed to nuclear weapons an opportunity to formalize a categorical rejection of the use or possession of nuclear weapons by anyone, under any circumstances.

Establishing a clear rejection of nuclear weapons would increase the stigma that already exists against these weapons. The process of banning nuclear weapons would require governments to decide whether they want to continue to support nuclear weapons or reject them entirely.

A ban treaty, negotiated and signed by a large number of the world’s states, would have wide-ranging implications for nuclear weapons, including pressures on military cooperation involving nuclear weapons – such as so-called “extended nuclear deterrence” and activities related to planning for nuclear attacks.

It would also help facilitate the development of a stronger community of states and civil society working together towards elimination based on a clear legal prohibition of nuclear weapons.

It is time for committed states to move forward. The political viability for progress on nuclear disarmament lies with the capacity of non-nuclear-armed states to lead the way.

The negotiation process would be open to all states. It should not be seen as antagonistic towards nuclear-armed states. Rather, it should be seen as an effort to assist those states that find themselves caught up in a complex situation of conflicting legal norms, where the use of nuclear weapons cannot be reconciled with the rules of international humanitarian law.

It can help those who find themselves confronting embedded national identity politics, where the power and prestige associated with nuclear weapons plays a role in constructing the national identity of certain states.

A treaty prohibiting nuclear weapons, by contributing to international stigmatization and rejection of these weapons, should be seen as supportive of genuine efforts by leaders within nuclear-armed states to disentangle themselves from a situation that puts them and our wider human society at great risk.

Ridding the world of nuclear weapons will take courage. It will take leadership by states free of nuclear weapons. But it is achievable, feasible and practical.

A ban treaty can be crafted in such a way to establish a comprehensive set of prohibitions and provide a framework under which the elimination of nuclear weapons can be pursued.

At a time when the nuclear-armed states continue to demonstrate their lack of commitment to pursuing tangible, good-faith nuclear disarmament, as international tensions rise and nuclear weapons lurk in the background behind the use of military force, and as the potential for accidents or use persists, banning nuclear weapons is an urgent necessity.
ICAN held a side event on 2 May to highlight the breadth of global support for a ban on nuclear weapons. Speakers offered insights on the potential effects of a ban in particular national and regional settings.

Jasmin Nario Galace from the Center for Peace Education in the Philippines moderated the panel. It brought together campaigners from various parts of the world: Rebecca Sharkey and Janet Fenton from ICAN United Kingdom, Anne Marte Skaland from ICAN Norway, Selma van Oostwaard from PAX in the Netherlands, Leo Hoffmann-Axthelm from ICAN Germany, Jessica Lawson from ICAN Australia, Linnet Ngayu from the African Council of Religious Leaders, and Cristian Wittmann from the Latin American and Caribbean network SHELAC.

The panellists shared stories of successes they have had in their campaign activities over the past few years. These include gathering signatures for ICAN’s global parliamentary appeal, getting influential politicians and religious leaders to express their support for a ban, and obtaining public opinion polls showing broad support for a ban.

Many campaigners are challenging the money that financial institutions all over the world are investing in nuclear-weapon-producing companies. The annual Don’t Bank on the Bomb report produced by PAX names and shames financial institutions supporting the nuclear weapon industry. It also praises those that have divested their funds.

The campaigners mentioned the importance of building stronger relationships with environmental organizations, religious groups, humanitarian agencies and various other interest groups to bring them on board, and engaging younger people to grow long-term support.
TRANSPARENCY AND OPENNESS are essential not only for the success of disarmament, but also for democracy. Without transparency, how are citizens to evaluate whether their governments are fulfilling their duties under the NPT? How are we to hold them to account for their continued inaction?

It is deeply regrettable that several states are unwilling even to confess that they host nuclear weapons on their soil. They withhold that information not only from ordinary citizens, but also from lawmakers. What does that say about the strength of their democracies? What does it say about the state of our international disarmament regime?

This opaque practice is entirely unacceptable. Nuclear-free states must not stand for it any longer. What hope is there for a fruitful exchange of views if states harbouring nuclear weapons refuse to declare that they are doing so? Their cold war policy of neither confirming nor denying the presence of nuclear weapons on their territory must be abandoned – now.

We demand to know: what is the location, the number, the status and the type of these weapons? What vehicles would be used to deliver them to their targets? Of states that permit the transit of nuclear weapons through their territory or airspace, we demand to know: when, how often, along which routes, and at what risk to your own citizens, and to the citizens of the world?

These are fundamental questions – reasonable questions – that must not go unanswered. We routinely implore nuclear-armed states to be more transparent with respect to their nuclear arsenals. But transparency is the responsibility of all states that claim protection from these immoral, unethical devices.

What steps are states taking to diminish the role and significance of nuclear weapons in their military doctrines? What has been achieved, in this respect, over the four and a half decades since the NPT became law? We wish to see regular, standardized reporting to the UN General Assembly on these and other pertinent questions. It is time for states to practise what they preach.

The existence of nuclear weapons anywhere is a threat to peace and security and humanity. For would-be victims of a nuclear attack, it makes no difference whether the weapon is detonated by a host state or a possessor state. The catastrophic humanitarian consequences are the same.

Let me stress that, while transparency is certainly necessary for the attainment of disarmament, it is not itself disarmament. Sharing information about one’s nuclear arsenal is not the same as consigning it to the dustbin of history.

To achieve a world free of nuclear weapons, legal measures are also needed – the most urgent of which is a ban treaty. We look forward to joining like-minded states – several months from now – at a negotiating conference to achieve this outcome.
The mandate of the working group is nuclear disarmament. So, with respect to states that have suggested that attention be placed on matters such as a fissile materials ban or entry into force of the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty (CTBT), it must be said that these are not disarmament measures at all. They are non-proliferation measures.

The CTBT, for example, has not had any discernible disarmament effect on nuclear-armed states, or on existing nuclear weapons, though it has been observed by some of those states for 20 years. In the United States and other countries, the CTBT has stimulated tremendous investment in surrogate nuclear testing capabilities, the goal of which is to design new nuclear explosives for new weapons.

To these two measures could be added many other non-proliferation measures typically listed as “building blocks” or “confidence-building measures”. Even though for some states it is convenient and customary to conflate non-proliferation, the prevention of nuclear terrorism and disarmament, the first two of these problems are peripheral to the working group’s purpose.

The group’s mandate was to address “concrete effective legal measures” to take forward multilateral nuclear disarmament negotiations.

There is simply no escaping the fact that the nuclear-armed states do not, at present, want to disarm. They have not even been represented at the working group, except through non-government organizations such as ours. They do not believe their arsenals are illegitimate, or immoral.

There is no evidence whatsoever that they seek a “nuclear-weapon-free world”, and every indication to the contrary. They believe – and some of them frequently state in domestic settings – that their threat of mutual annihilation has “kept the peace”. Beyond this, some states have, and seek to further develop, through concrete, funded plans, nuclear war-fighting doctrines and weapons, as a means of winning wars begun with conventional weapons. The United States is one of these countries.

Their concrete plans are to keep these instruments of mass annihilation – in the case of the US, for many decades. Their modernization plans and commitments currently carry a collective financial commitment that far exceeds a trillion dollars.

Therefore, given these facts, all the suggested disarmament measures we hear from states that require good-faith participation of nuclear-armed states will fail, for the same reasons that identical efforts have been failing for decades. Can sure-to-fail measures be called “effective”? Do they meet the standard given to the working group? In what way are the impossible, merely hypothetical measures we so often hear even relevant?

All available data suggest that, until nuclear weapons can be sufficiently stigmatized and norms against them strengthened, only measures carried by non-nuclear-armed states can be “effective”. One criterion for an effective, practical measure is that the participation of nuclear-weapon states is not required to achieve it.

There is simply no escaping the fact that the nuclear-armed states do not, at present, want to disarm. They do not believe their arsenals are illegitimate, or immoral.
ICAN’s Public Profile

During the May session, ICAN and Ploughshares Fund held a press conference with UN messenger for peace Michael Douglas. The US actor praised ICAN for its work to highlight the risks and catastrophic humanitarian consequences of nuclear weapon detonations.

He warned that the threat of nuclear war has not gone away, and called for greater efforts internationally to rid the world of nuclear weapons. Journalists from major news outlets such as Reuters and Agence France-Presse covered the press conference.

Article headlines included “Disarmament group renews push to ban nuclear weapons” and “Campaign for a nuclear-weapon-free world intensifies”.

Several Japanese media outlets, including national broadcaster NHK and the Asahi Shimbun, quoted ICAN spokespeople in their reports on the working group. ICAN campaigners also penned opinion articles for websites such as the Huffington Post and Guardian. Our campaigners maintained a strong presence on social media, too.
The risk of a nuclear detonation – whether by accident or design – appears to be increasing. We believe that the heightened tensions among nuclear-armed states and their allies in recent years make progress towards nuclear disarmament all the more important and urgent.

The current security environment, rather than being an excuse for continued inaction, must be a stimulus for action.

Given the absence of nuclear-armed states from the working group, we believe that it would be beneficial to focus on the important role of non-nuclear-weapon states in reducing the risk of nuclear detonations – a role that has been under-explored.

We propose that the working group recommend in its report to the UN General Assembly that non-nuclear-weapon states with nuclear weapons deployed on their territory take measures to reduce the risk of accidental, mistaken, unauthorized or intentional detonations.

Moreover, we urge these states to answer the following questions: Have there been any recent security breaches at the facilities where nuclear weapons are deployed on their territory? What would be the potential humanitarian consequences of an attack on the facilities at which the nuclear weapons are deployed? What is the risk that such an attack would result in a nuclear detonation or the theft of the nuclear weapons? Are the nuclear weapons at these facilities ever transported along public roads and, if so, does that heighten the risk of a nuclear detonation? What safeguards are in place to prevent an accidental, mistaken or unauthorized launch?

As a partner organization of ICAN, Seguridad Humana en Latinoamérica y el Caribe (SEHLAC) is committed to the realization of a nuclear-weapon-ban treaty. We consider the pursuit of non-legal measures to reduce the risk of nuclear weapon detonations as complementary to this objective.
As we look at the destruction and mass displacement wrought by the use of explosive weapons in populated areas, at the continued flow of arms to fuel conflicts around the world, and at the potential development of autonomous weapons, there are all too many reasons to be concerned with security in the 21st century. Nuclear weapons are one of them.

When discussing nuclear weapons, we would be wary of any framing in which humanitarian and security considerations exist in some kind of simplistic binary dynamic. Our motivation as a global campaign to ban nuclear weapons stems from a will to live in a more secure, more humane world. Security is not security without humanity.

It is not that those promoting a prohibition do not appreciate the wide range of security considerations that states hold in relation to nuclear weapons. Rather, it is that those in favour of prohibition have a somewhat different conception of security than the governments that possess or seek security from them.

We would contend that nuclear weapons distort the security of the countries that have them or use them in their security doctrines. This distortion of security manifests in a couple of ways, from our perspective.

Firstly, the multi-billion-dollar nuclear weapon establishments distract from more immediate security concerns that the people in those countries actually face. And the idea of deterrence is as much an illusion of security as anything, with no credible military utility discernible from a situation in which states make suicidal threats against each other while maintaining arsenals of thousands of nuclear bombs and missiles that constitute an inherently unsustainable risk to us all.

Secondly, and perhaps more importantly, nuclear weapons force states into an automatically adversarial relationship in which they threaten each other with the most destructive technologies of violence we have been able to develop as human beings.

These weapons lock states into security concepts that have proved very difficult to shift. The impasse in disarmament work by the nuclear-armed states and indeed their boycott of the working group are a testament to this.

Fortunately, many states – by far the majority of states – have managed to avoid falling into this trap. Some such states live next door to nuclear-armed or allied states. Most states in fact consider the existence of nuclear weapons to be one of the greatest threats to global security today.

The risks from cyber-attacks and the deterioration of the broader security situation only heighten concerns about the way in which nuclear weapons undermine our collective security.

We recognize that certain states continue to choose to embed the potential use of weapons of mass destruction in their security doctrines and seemingly see no way out of this choice as it stands today. Like many others, we of course disagree with this choice, but we certainly don’t ignore it or brush it aside. On the contrary, we are working hard to change it.

At the same time, we would encourage those states that seek security from nuclear weapons to recognize the different conceptions of security that exist.

We would invite all states to try to think about how a new legally binding instrument to prohibit nuclear weapons can have a positive impact on global security.

It would reaffirm and solidify the general political and legal rejections of nuclear weapons that exist today, reducing any space for them to be perceived as legitimate. It would reinforce the rules and norms against the proliferation of nuclear weapons.

It is not designed to be a “quick fix”, but would be a catalyst that might help states to break out of the nuclear-armed trap in which they find themselves.

The commencement of a diplomatic process to negotiate this new instrument now appears within reach. The outcome of this diplomatic process, as well as the process itself, will provide a strong challenge to the insecurity that nuclear weapons entail.

Clearly some see no role for themselves in this process, nor any value in such a process. Some even feel comfortable asserting with absolute omniscient certainty that it will never have its desired effect.

Surely, though, these states cannot expect those that reject nuclear weapons to hold back from developing a treaty to prohibit them, simply because one group of states does not consider itself in a position to reject these weapons? We would hope that in time those states currently locked into a nuclear-armed security straightjacket will come to see the ban as a helpful contribution to a more positive global security – one that is not weighed down by concepts of global injustice, extreme violence and inhumanity.
Some of the members of ICAN’s advocacy team at the May session of the working group.
**AFRICAN GROUP**

“[The African Group] strongly supports the call for banning nuclear weapons – the only WMD not prohibited by an international legal instrument.”
– 2 May

**ALGERIA**

“We support all of the efforts aimed at banning nuclear weapons.”
– 10 May

**AUSTRIA**

“From the Austrian point of view, to prohibit use would not be enough. We need a prohibition of possession.”
– 9 May

“We are all in agreement that we will need a legally binding norm on prohibition if we want to achieve nuclear disarmament.”
– 10 May

“It seems to be logical that those who think that nuclear weapons contribute to their security do not see the urgency in prohibiting them. However, a majority of states see only the risk of nuclear weapons to their security.”
– 11 May

**BRAZIL**

“We believe that the open-ended working group should make substantive recommendations to the United Nations General Assembly … to start, at an early date, multilateral negotiations of a legally binding instrument, or set of instruments, for the prohibition of nuclear weapons as a preliminary measure towards their total elimination.”

“[Sub-critical nuclear testing] should be explicitly banned under any treaty on nuclear weapons … that has to be covered by a treaty prohibiting nuclear armaments.”
– 2 May

“A comprehensive assessment of the catastrophic humanitarian consequences of nuclear weapons can only lead to the conclusion that these weapons are illegitimate and, therefore, should be outlawed and – ultimately – eliminated.”
– 4 May

“Brazil has expressed its view that the most viable pathway for nuclear disarmament is a treaty prohibiting nuclear weapons, establishing general interdictions and obligations and an unambiguous political commitment to eliminate nuclear weapons.”
– 11 May

“The significant majority of states, in one way or another, have supported the start of negotiations on the prohibition of nuclear weapons with a view to their future total elimination. Brazil is convinced that this is the most viable option for unlocking the stalemate in nuclear disarmament.”

“A treaty prohibiting nuclear weapons can be established before proceeding to actual elimination – and provide a springboard for it.”
– 13 May

**COLOMBIA**

“A treaty prohibiting nuclear weapons … would establish the political basis for the complete elimination of nuclear weapons.”
– 9 May

“We sign on to the idea of a ban treaty that accelerates the process towards an all-encompassing convention.”
– 12 May

“Colombia joins the proposal to move towards negotiations of a universal, legally binding instrument that prohibits nuclear weapons.”
– 13 May
**Costa Rica**

“We believe that the most practical way to start [the disarmament process] is through the negotiation of a legally binding instrument banning nuclear weapons.”

– 11 May

**Democratic Republic of the Congo**

“The prohibition of nuclear weapons would mark a substantial step in the right direction … In general, weapons that have been prohibited increasingly become seen as illegitimate.”

“My delegation welcomes the calls for a nuclear weapon ban treaty as the best means of packaging the elements and prohibitions that are needed to make progress in nuclear disarmament.”

– 10 May

**Dominican Republic**

“The Dominican Republic finds it unacceptable that nuclear weapons are the only weapons of mass destruction for which there is not a comprehensive ban – as yet.”

“We are aware that prohibition is not tantamount to total elimination, and that it must be backed up by other measures pertaining to the elimination of nuclear weapons.”

– 9 May

“We note the several working papers from both governments and civil society that are supportive of a new legal instrument prohibiting nuclear weapons, even without the participation of the nuclear-weapon states. We strongly support these proposals.”

– 13 May

**Egypt**

“We continue to endorse the negotiation of a nuclear weapons convention, which would aim at the total and irreversible elimination of nuclear weapons within a specified framework of time. Yet, if necessary, a first step to that objective could be the negotiation of a treaty banning the production, development, possession, transfer and use or threat of use of nuclear weapons.”

– 11 May

“Given the level of support [for a prohibition treaty] during the February and May sessions, we are sure that you [the chair] will reflect this in the report in a balanced and fair manner.”

– 13 May

**Guatemala**

“Like the majority of states in this room, Guatemala supports the goal of a new legal instrument that is broad in scope and fills the legal gap.”

“Non-nuclear-weapon states should show that we are committed to filling the legal gap [by prohibiting nuclear weapons], just as we have done for all other weapons of mass destruction. The status quo is not acceptable.”

– 13 May

**Honduras**

“I wish to reiterate the urgent need for negotiations with a view to the swift conclusion of a universal, legally binding instrument that would prohibit nuclear weapons.”

– 2 May

**Indonesia**

“If launching a negotiation process on a [nuclear weapons convention] is not plausible, then this delegation is open to the idea of as a first step commencing negotiations on a treaty that categorically prohibits activities related to nuclear weapons.”

– 10 May

“We believe that a treaty prohibiting nuclear weapons is a pathway towards a world free of nuclear weapons that merits our positive consideration. We also believe that a new legal instrument prohibiting nuclear weapons would represent an effective measure under article VI of the NPT.”
"A prohibition on nuclear weapons would coexist with, and support and enhance, the NPT in much the same way the anti-personnel land mine ban treaty coexists with, and supports and enhances, the convention on certain conventional weapons."

– 12 May

"One of the pertinent points that we seem to agree on is the prohibition of nuclear weapons. It seems to this delegation that the differing view is on the timing … There are some delegations that think that prohibition can only be achieved at the so-called ‘minimization point’. A few delegations say that it can only happen after elimination has taken place. The majority of delegations say that the prohibition of nuclear weapons … needs to be pursued with a sense of urgency."

– 13 May

IRELAND

"We all know and agree that the only action which can truly address the risk [of a nuclear weapon detonation] is the prohibition and elimination of nuclear weapons."

– 2 May

"Nuclear weapons remain the only weapons of mass destruction not prohibited by law. Effective measures are envisaged and required by the Non-Proliferation Treaty."

– 10 May

JAMAICA

"We see a global prohibition as closing the legal gap and addressing the ambiguity in nuclear governance."

"The global prohibition would also establish a universal norm against the possession and use of nuclear weapons, thereby stigmatizing such weapons and discouraging horizontal and vertical proliferation … [It] would also serve as a catalyst for the elimination of such weapons. Indeed, it would encourage nuclear-weapon states and nuclear umbrella states to stop relying on these types of weapons of mass destruction for their perceived security. Another notable impact of a global prohibition is that it would encourage financial institutions to divest their holdings in nuclear weapons companies."

– 9 May

"Jamaica is advocating a broad scope for a legally binding instrument on the global prohibition on nuclear weapons. In this connection, the elements of such a comprehensive ban could be drawn from the nuclear-weapon-free zone treaties and the biological and chemical weapons conventions."

– 10 May

"The ban treaty approach … [is] the most viable approach to take forward multilateral nuclear disarmament negotiations."

"CELAC countries believe that the prohibition of nuclear weapons will set a norm which should be followed by other efforts and negotiations towards the achievement and maintenance of a world without nuclear weapons."

– 11 May

"Pursuing a comprehensive ban on nuclear weapons is the next realistic step on our collective path to attain and maintain a world free of nuclear weapons."

"We see no reason why we cannot begin negotiations immediately."

– 13 May

KENYA

"The challenge that we are facing today is that there is no instrument or agreement that explicitly outlaws nuclear weapons.

– 2 May

"It is our belief that the negotiation and conclusion of a legally binding instrument banning nuclear weapons is necessary … The participation, signature or ratification of nuclear-armed powers, while desirable, is not necessary for the negotiation and conclusion of the instrument."

– 10 May

MALAYSIA

"We hope to begin negotiations on a global prohibition of nuclear weapons as a contribution to the achievement and maintenance of a world free of nuclear weapons. We are convinced that the most viable option for immediate action is to negotiate a legally binding instrument prohibiting nuclear weapons."

"The legally binding instrument prohibiting nuclear weapons does not need to include measures leading up to the elimination of nuclear weapons. Measures to initiate the destruction of nuclear weapons in an irreversible, verifiable and transparent manner would be the subject of future negotiations."

"Prohibition in this legally binding instrument – which we envisage applicable to nuclear weapons or other nuclear explosive devices – would..."
include possession, use and threat of use, acquisition, stockpiling, development, testing, transfer, transit, stationing, deployment [and] encouraging or inducing, directly or indirectly, any activity related to nuclear weapons.”

– 9 MAY

“If nuclear-weapon states are unwilling to even have discussions on nuclear disarmament issues, then a catalyst for action is needed – and a prohibition treaty does that.”

“Prohibition strengthens regimes such as the NPT by reinforcing the commitment to disarmament by non-nuclear-weapon states.”

– 10 MAY

“With a prohibition treaty, nuclear-armed states need to know that global opinion is against [nuclear] weapons, that such weapons are unacceptable, and that there needs to be a start in this process [towards the goal of elimination].”

“[We agree on] the importance of not preventing a clear majority of states pursuing a negotiating process right now.”

– 13 MAY

**Mexico**

“As history has taught us, prohibition typically precedes elimination. We assert that the prohibition of nuclear weapons is a fundamental element to complement the nuclear non-proliferation and disarmament regime. We assert as well that a prohibition would have a tremendous impact in the achievement of a world free from nuclear weapons.”

“[It will] contribute to the understanding that the existence of nuclear weapons is unacceptable, by establishing a global norm which will stigmatize such weapons.”

“Is 126 a credible majority? That is the number of states who have endorsed the Humanitarian Pledge. I would argue that it is.”

– 9 MAY

“[There have been no objections to any particular elements that could form part of a new legal instrument. The report should reflect that there were no objections to these particular elements.”

– 10 MAY

“A prohibition could be a confidence-building measure – perhaps the only credible confidence-building measure.”

– 11 MAY

“[We agree on] the importance of not preventing a clear majority of states pursuing a negotiating process right now.”

– 13 MAY

**Nicaragua**

“The supporters of a prohibition come from all regions of the world, not only from Latin America and the Caribbean.”

“A prohibition on nuclear weapons, apart from making a major disarmament contribution, will be the ultimate non-proliferation measure – so, rather than weakening the NPT, it will strengthen the NPT.”

– 12 MAY

“Filling the legal gap requires an open and inclusive process … [that] would not depend on the participation of the nuclear-armed states. Nicaragua considers that, in order to create an effective and general prohibition on nuclear weapons, the international community would need to include a number of prohibitions.”

– 9 MAY

**New Zealand**

“The most important lesson to be drawn from our experience with a range of other disarmament regimes would seem to be that the elements, or prohibitions, covered in a new instrument must be truly comprehensive and leave no gaps. The full range of prohibitions must be covered explicitly and with sufficient detail to stand the test of time.”

– 9 MAY

“A treaty banning nuclear weapons will place us firmly on the path to elimination, and would greatly enhance the security of this fragile planet.”

“Let us focus on preparing the ground for a treaty banning these ultimate harmful and deadly weapons of mass destruction. They are immoral. They are inhumane. And soon they will be made illegal.”

– 12 MAY

“The momentum we have all contributed to toward a ban is clearly unstoppable. The only

Palau stands ready to join the proposed negotiating conference in 2017 on a treaty to ban nuclear weapons.”

– 4 MAY

“The overwhelming majority of UN member states have indicated their readiness to work together to prohibit nuclear weapons. The question that we should ask is not whether a global ban on nuclear weapons is necessary, but rather how it can be negotiated and what provisions it should contain.”

– 9 MAY

“A treaty banning nuclear weapons will place us firmly on the path to elimination, and would greatly enhance the security of this fragile planet.”

“Let us focus on preparing the ground for a treaty banning these ultimate harmful and deadly weapons of mass destruction. They are immoral. They are inhumane. And soon they will be made illegal.”

– 12 MAY

“The momentum we have all contributed to toward a ban is clearly unstoppable. The only
question now is: Will you stand on the right side of history?”
– 13 May

PANAMA
“For Panama, it is not acceptable that these are the only weapons of mass destruction not totally banned.”
“This new convention should prohibit the possession, development, testing, acquisition, stockpiling, transfer, deployment, use or threat of use of nuclear weapons, and also the assistance, financing or incitement of associated acts.”
“This convention would be a significant step towards nuclear disarmament. Simultaneously, it will strengthen existing nuclear-weapon-free zones and fill the legal gap in the normative framework regarding nuclear weapons.”
– 13 May

PHILIPPINES
“We believe the Humanitarian Pledge provides a robust pathway towards a world without nuclear weapons.”
– 10 May

SERBIA
“While the international community was able to conclude a global ban on biological and chemical weapons, a legal gap on nuclear weapons continues to exist.”
– 4 May

SOUTH AFRICA
“A prohibition treaty could be a stand-alone treaty which establishes a norm against nuclear weapons through a global non-discriminatory prohibition on possession, use, threat of use, acquisition, stockpiling, deployment, as well as assistance, encouragement or inducement of [these] acts.”
– 11 May

SWITZERLAND
“Switzerland believes that nuclear weapons should be prohibited. It must remain our goal to work towards a verifiable prohibition. There seems to be a widely shared view that a prohibition should be part of an instrument.”
– 9 May

THAILAND
“If we want to be clear and precise in setting norms, as the international community has been with other weapons, then the prohibitions should be comprehensive. They should include prohibitions on the use, threat of use, deployment, acquisition, possession, stockpiling, transfer, development and production of nuclear weapons or other nuclear explosive devices.”
– 10 May

VENEZUELA
“Venezuela supports the negotiation of a nuclear weapons ban convention, which will increase international security.”
– 13 May
Main: An ICAN side event on the growing global movement to ban nuclear weapons.
Inset: A protest outside the Canadian mission to the UN. Canada argues there is no “legal gap” to fill.
“Legal measures such as the prohibition of the use, production, stockpiling and transfer of nuclear weapons have not yet been considered in detail in the NPT context. However, it is clear that such measures are required for achieving and maintaining a world without nuclear weapons.”

“Agreement and participation of the nuclear-armed states would not be necessary for the negotiation of such a treaty [banning nuclear weapons]. Negotiations could therefore commence – in a United Nations setting or elsewhere – as soon as a sufficient number of non-nuclear-weapon states decided to do so.”

“A ban treaty would provide the basic prohibitions and obligations for all states parties to it and set the political objectives of the international community with regard to the complete elimination of nuclear weapons … Since it does not need to be universal at its inception, it could be a more practical way to take forward multilateral nuclear disarmament negotiations.”

“We believe that the debate should no longer be about whether a global ban on nuclear weapons is necessary, but rather how we can achieve it and what provisions it should contain.”

“A global treaty banning nuclear weapons would address the fragmentary and, in some respects, discriminatory nature of the existing regime by closing loopholes and applying the same rules to all states equally. It would contribute to the progressive stigmatization of nuclear weapons, and constitute an ‘effective measure’ for nuclear disarmament as required by article VI of the NPT.”

“CELAC member states have decided, at the level of heads of state and government, to join the efforts by the international community to advance towards the negotiation of a universal legally binding instrument prohibiting the possession, development, production, acquisition, testing, stockpiling, transfer, use and threat of use of nuclear weapons.”
“For the majority of the international community, there is no reason why a universal prohibition of nuclear weapons should not be pursued immediately. We must not wait to witness once again the catastrophic consequence of a detonation of a nuclear weapon before we decide to start negotiations on a treaty prohibiting nuclear weapons.”

“The negotiation of such an instrument should be open to all states and its entry into force should not depend on the ratification by nuclear-armed states.”

“Prohibition is not a substitution to the total elimination of nuclear weapons. CELAC countries believe that the prohibition of nuclear weapons will set a norm which should be followed by other efforts and negotiations towards the achievement and maintenance of a world without nuclear weapons.”

“CELAC proposes that the open-ended working group makes the following recommendations to the United Nations General Assembly … to begin a multilateral diplomatic process for the negotiation of a legally binding instrument for the prohibition of nuclear weapons towards their total elimination.”

**WORKING PAPER 17**
**SUBMITTED BY MEXICO**

“A global prohibition on nuclear weapons is a fundamental element to complete the nuclear non-proliferation and disarmament regime.”

“A prohibition on nuclear weapons would have a tremendous impact to the achievement of a world free of nuclear weapons, among others, by … contributing to the understanding that the existence of nuclear weapons is unacceptable by establishing a global norm that will stigmatize such weapons, discouraging horizontal and vertical proliferation …”

“A multilateral legally binding instrument to prohibit nuclear weapons could contribute to the achievement and maintenance of a world without nuclear weapons.”

“A prohibition on nuclear weapons is not an end in itself; additional or complementary measures might be required once such prohibition is in place.”

**WORKING PAPER 27**
**SUBMITTED BY NICARAGUA**

“It is likely that the activities to be prohibited in this new treaty do not vary substantially with respect to those found in other international instruments on disarmament, such as those prohibiting use, possession, development, production, acquisition, stockpiling or transfer. Notwithstanding the foregoing, we need to include in this new treaty a greater number of prohibitions …”

“The main purpose of this new treaty must be to strengthen the global norm against the use and possession of nuclear weapons, as well as to facilitate the process towards their total elimination …”

“The prohibitions should be sufficiently broad and specific to prevent countries from engaging in activities that: 1) provide for the quantitative and qualitative improvement of nuclear weapons; 2) contribute to a possible use of nuclear weapons; 3) are perceived as acts legitimizing nuclear weapons; or 4) undermine progress towards general and complete disarmament.”

**WORKING PAPER 34**
**SUBMITTED BY ARGENTINA, BRAZIL, COSTA RICA, ECUADOR, GUATEMALA, INDONESIA, MALAYSIA, MEXICO, THE PHILIPPINES AND ZAMBIA**

“We are convinced that the prohibition of nuclear weapons, as a contribution to the achievement and maintenance of a world free of nuclear weapons.”

“We are convinced that the most viable option for immediate action is to negotiate a legally binding instrument prohibiting nuclear weapons, establishing general interdictions and obligations and pronouncing an unambiguous political commitment to the achievement and maintenance of a world free of nuclear weapons.”

“A legally binding instrument prohibiting nuclear weapons would be a contribution in itself to nuclear disarmament. But, in order to reach our ultimate goal of achieving and maintaining a world free of nuclear weapons, other legally binding instruments, set of instruments or protocols to the legally binding instrument prohibiting nuclear weapons shall be negotiated.”

“We have renounced the possession of nuclear weapons by a legally binding international instrument. Therefore, we hope to begin negotiations on a global prohibition on nuclear weapons, as a contribution to the achievement and maintenance of a world free of nuclear weapons.”

“We are convinced that the most viable option for immediate action is to negotiate a legally binding instrument prohibiting nuclear weapons, establishing general interdictions and obligations and pronouncing an unambiguous political commitment to the achievement and maintenance of a world free of nuclear weapons.”
weapons. Measures to negotiate the destruction of nuclear weapons in an irreversible, verifiable and transparent manner would be the subject of future negotiations.”

“With regard to the substance of such an agreement, some of the elements that negotiators of a legally binding instrument prohibiting nuclear weapons could consider including in such an instrument are: prohibition of [possession, use and threat of use, acquisition, stockpiling, development, testing, production, transfer, transit, stationing, deployment and] assisting, encouraging or inducing, directly or indirectly, the engagement in any activity prohibited by the legally binding instrument.”

“A legally binding instrument prohibiting nuclear weapons would have a political as well as legal impact on the disarmament debate and it would provide much-needed direction for further initiatives aiming at the elimination of nuclear weapons and the maintenance of a nuclear-weapon-free world. Such an instrument would not need universal adherence to be negotiated nor to enter into force.”

“We propose that the open-ended working group, in its report, includes the following recommendations to the General Assembly: (a) convene a conference in 2017, open to all states, international organizations and civil society, to negotiate a legally binding instrument to prohibit nuclear weapons; (b) report to the United Nations high-level international conference on nuclear disarmament to be convened no later than 2018, pursuant to resolution 68/32, on the progress made on the negotiation of such an instrument.”

**WORKING PAPER 35**
**SUBMITTED BY IRELAND**

“The Humanitarian Pledge call for states to ‘identify and pursue effective measures to fill the legal gap for the prohibition and elimination of nuclear weapons’ refers primarily to the fact that, although treaties to prohibit and eliminate chemical and biological weapons are in force, no such global regime has yet been negotiated for nuclear weapons.”

**WORKING PAPER 36**
**SUBMITTED BY ENDORSERS OF THE HUMANITARIAN PLEDGE (126 STATES)**

“The ‘building blocks’ approach by definition recognizes that multiple measures are needed and essentially refers to a combination and sequence of different legal and non-legal measures. Conceptually, these different measures would include a legally binding instrument prohibiting nuclear weapons in some form.”

“A prohibition/ban treaty would likely entail the prohibition of the use, stockpiling, production and transfer of nuclear weapons, without necessarily addressing all effective legal measures covered by a comprehensive nuclear weapons convention.”

“The countries supporting the Humanitarian Pledge consider it indispensable to reflect the following elements in the recommendations of the open-ended working group: … to pursue an additional legal instrument or instruments with urgency and to support international efforts to prohibit and eliminate nuclear weapons.”

**WORKING PAPER 37**
**SUBMITTED BY BRAZIL**

“The technical intricacies of a nuclear weapons convention would probably need the robust involvement of at least several states possessing nuclear weapons, whereas a treaty prohibiting nuclear weapons could be negotiated even without them, if necessary.”

“The most viable option for immediate action seems to be the negotiation of a treaty prohibiting nuclear weapons, establishing general interdictions and obligations, and an unambiguous political commitment to completely eliminate nuclear weapons.”

“Such a treaty should benefit from further developments. It could be complemented by protocols on national declarations, national implementation, verification and phases of destruction, assistance and technical cooperation, and the non-discriminatory verification regime to be implemented after the dismantlement of all nuclear weapons.”

“A prohibition on nuclear weapons followed by the negotiation of protocols on elimination and other relevant issues would be the best possible option available, and could be immediately pursued.”

“Brazil would like that the final report of the open-ended working group to the General Assembly of the UN at its 71st session recommends the immediate commencement of negotiations on a treaty for the prohibition of nuclear weapons, which would establish the main prohibitions and obligations associated with that goal, as well as the general provisions regarding future steps aimed at the complete elimination of nuclear weapons.”
“Prohibiting nuclear weapons would accelerate nuclear disarmament and strengthen non-proliferation and nuclear security. If anyone argues that prohibiting nuclear weapons is bad for security, the responsibility of proof lies on that side.”

Akira Kawasaki, Peace Boat

“Initial steps, such as the proposed nuclear ban treaty, are likely to change the calculus of nuclear weapons decision-making in the nuclear-armed and nuclear-dependent states.”

Rebecca Johnson, Acronym Institute

“A nuclear ban treaty ends the loopholes and circumstances that have allowed questionable, risky practices to go on for far too long. A ban is necessary. A ban is possible. A ban is coming.”

Susi Snyder, PAX

“Nuclear weapons are in fact suicide bombs on a global scale, and our knowledge of what they will do leads inescapably to the conclusion that they must be prohibited and eliminated.”

Ira Helfand, IPPNW