



Third Conference on the Humanitarian Impact of Nuclear Weapons

General Debate

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Thank you Mr Chairman,

We would like to start first by thanking Austria for hosting the conference, the panelists for providing us with new insights, and civil society for its valuable contributions to our deliberations.

It is difficult to deny that the humanitarian impact of nuclear weapons is an issue of global dimension, because of the unprecedented destructive power of nuclear weapons, their massive and indiscriminate effects and their capacity to represent an existential threat to all life on our planet.

The discussions here in Vienna have confirmed in our view that it is difficult to envisage how any use of nuclear weapons could be in conformity with the principles and rules of international humanitarian law.

Yesterday's discussions have also shown that the risks of a nuclear weapon detonation are higher than previously understood. Accordingly, we all share the responsibility to prevent any future use of nuclear weapons. There is a need for urgent action on three levels:

- First, existing obligations must be fully implemented, whether this concerns nuclear disarmament, nuclear non-proliferation or nuclear security;
- second, immediate and concrete steps must be taken to reduce risks, such as De-alerting or reducing the role of nuclear weapons in security doctrines;
- and third, we need to initiate a more focused debate on how to move towards a world without nuclear weapons in a more resolute manner.

An additional legally-binding instrument, or additional legally-binding instruments, will be required to overcome the current nuclear status quo and to ensure that nuclear weapons are never used again and totally eliminated.

We share the view that a prohibition of nuclear weapons will be necessary to reach the final goal of a world without nuclear weapons. We need to start discussing now, more systematically, how this can be achieved, ensuring maximum support and effect.

Mr Chairman,

This Vienna conference is taking place a few months before the next Review Conference of the NPT. The humanitarian dimension is at the heart of the NPT and should motivate us to fully implement all existing commitments, including the 2010 Action Plan. But we also need to build on the momentum and energy that has been generated by this debate, to begin exploring in detail the various options to develop more effective measures to implement Article VI.

We have always seen this humanitarian perspective as a narrative that should unite all of us. In this regard, we welcome the participation of the United States and the United Kingdom in this conference and we call upon the absent possessor states to join the debate in the future.

As we approach the 70th commemoration of the catastrophic bombings of Hiroshima and Nagasaki, it is our collective responsibility to ensure that future generations will never again be confronted with the destructive power of nuclear weapons.

Thank you.