



UNFOLD ZERO and Global Wave 2015

Statement to the 2015 Review Conference of the Parties to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons UN Headquarters, New York.

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Your Excellencies, representatives of civil society, ladies and gentlemen,

UNFOLD ZERO is a platform that was established last year in order to highlight the role and possibilities of United Nations bodies and mechanisms to facilitate the achievement of a nuclear weapon free world.

The UN system has some flaws. Not all UN members subscribe to compulsory jurisdiction of the International Court of Justice. The P5 can block measures in the Security Council through their veto power. And any member of the Conference on Disarmament can block progress because of the tradition of requiring consensus. We concur with those who warn against repeat the mistake of relying solely on the CD to take forward multilateral nuclear disarmament negotiations.

On the positive side, the UN brings together all the key players relevant to the achievement of a nuclear weapons free world. This includes the nuclear-armed countries, the countries under extended nuclear deterrence relationships, the non-nuclear countries, and civil society actors engaged in nuclear disarmament.

The UN includes key organs through which nuclear disarmament agreements can be negotiated and their implementation monitored and enforced.

Importantly, the UN provides a cooperative security framework for addressing security challenges without recourse to the threat or use of nuclear weapons. This cooperative security framework provides possibilities to resolve these issues through diplomacy, negotiation, mediation, arbitration, adjudication, referral to regional authorities, and collective action to enforce peace and security based on the rule of law.

Unfold Zero aims to ensure that no possible avenue for achieving progress within the UN is left unexplored, not because everything must be done within the UN fold, but because if it can be done within the United Nations that is most often the best approach.

UNFOLD ZERO highlights some key UN initiatives for nuclear abolition, including:

- The proposal by Mexico to amend the Rome Statute for an International Criminal Court in order to include the use of nuclear weapons as a war crime under Article 8 para 2 (b) of the Statute;
- The UN Open Ended Working Group on Taking Forward Multilateral Nuclear Disarmament Negotiations. The OEWG sessions in 2013 were very productive in helping to outline the various options. Re-opening an OEWG process in 2016 could build on this to forge agreement on the most promising approach to commence negotiations.
- Elevating the issue with Heads of State and Government at the United Nations. Imagine the impact if every Head of State and Government representing a nation that has already renounced nuclear weapons stated emphatically at the UN General Assembly this September “Our security is enhanced from being a nation without nuclear weapons and we are proud of being part of the overwhelming majority of countries that have decided the same. We invite the nuclear reliant States to join us in reaping the even greater security benefits of a nuclear-weapon-free world.’
- The High Level Conference on nuclear disarmament which the UN General Assembly has decided to convene no later than 2018. UNFOLD ZERO focuses on what might be a suitable preparatory process, what type of agreement could be adopted at this conference, and how to ensure participation by States at the highest level. Perhaps a revived OEWG could provide a suitable preparatory process.
- Cities are not Targets. Any attack on cities would constitute a violation of international humanitarian law, which prohibits use of weapons or military operations that target civilians or which cause indiscriminate harm to civilians. The Global Security Institute, a co-sponsor of UNFOLD ZERO, has proposed that the UN Security Council should affirm this – or if the Security Council fails to do so, the UN General Assembly should make such an affirmation.

A key aspect of UNFOLD ZERO is to educate civil society and policymakers about the possibilities for nuclear disarmament through the UN and through related mechanisms like the NPT.

The International Day for the Total Elimination of Nuclear Weapons, established by the UN in 2013, provides one platform for doing this. UNFOLD ZERO organised global actions including the UN Geneva commemoration in conjunction with UN Office of Disarmament Affairs.

With regard to the 2015 NPT Review Conference, I wish to highlight Global Wave 2015 – an action in which people all over the world ‘waved goodbye to nuclear weapons.’ The wave started with over 2000 people waving goodbye to nuclear weapons at the Peace and Planet rally in New York last Sunday.

It then swept around the world in 24 hours with over 100 exciting Global Wave actions in over 60 countries - nuclear armed and non-nuclear.

There were waves at schools & universities, homes & workplaces, city halls & parliaments, places of worship & interfaith gatherings, peace monuments & museums, at music festivals & sports events, on bikes and surfboards, at nuclear weapons deployment sites and production facilities, and at conferences and special anniversary events. Photos and videos of the wave actions are online, and a presentation of them will be made at a side event later in the NPT Review Conference.

Global Wave 2015 and UNFOLD ZERO join in calling on all governments to 'wave goodbye to nuclear weapons' and establish a nuclear weapons free world.

Thank you