

**2015 Review Conference of the Nuclear Nonproliferation Treaty
Statement for Main Committee I
Delegation of Austria**

Mr Chairman,

Let me congratulate you on the assumption of this important function. My delegation looks forward to working with you in the coming days and weeks to achieve a ambitious, strong and credible outcome that will strengthen the NPT.

We already explained in the General Debate, the reasons why we are gravely concerned about the disappointing degree of implementation of Article VI of the Treaty, the commitments undertaken in 1995 and 2000 and of the actions contained in the disarmament part of the 2010 Action Plan.

We also explained that we consider the absence of a clear move away from reliance on nuclear weapons and statements and, in fact, contrary actions in nuclear weapons States, such as nuclear weapons modernization plans and resource allocations, as a fundamental threat to the credibility of the NPT. Austria is convinced that we can only do this through a collective and determined move away from nuclear weapons all together through strong nonproliferation measures and credible and urgent nuclear disarmament.

We believe that the humanitarian imperative, the increased understanding of the unacceptable humanitarian consequences and the risks associated with the mere existence of nuclear weapons provide the arguments and the urgency to finally take these determined steps.

Mr. Chairman,

Austria had the honor to coordinate the latest statement on the humanitarian consequences by the so-called "Group of 16". This latest statement, delivered by Austria's Foreign Minister Sebastian Kurz, was supported by 159 States. To our knowledge, this is the highest number of UN member states ever supporting a cross-regional declaration on a particular substantive issue. It reflects the shared sense of concern about the catastrophic consequences of nuclear weapons and the deep implications for human survival, for our environment, for socio-economic development, and for the health of future generations. It is in the interest of the very survival of humanity that these weapons are never used again, under any circumstances. The catastrophic effects of a nuclear weapon detonation, whether by accident or miscalculation or design, cannot be adequately addressed. All efforts must thus be exerted to eliminate the threat of these weapons of mass destruction. The only guarantee for this is through their total elimination.

It is of key importance for the credibility of the NPT and the work that we do on nuclear disarmament in this committee that this views, which is shared by the overwhelming majority of States and citizens in our interconnected world, is adequately reflected, as it must underpin all approaches and efforts towards nuclear disarmament.

Mr. Chairman,

I have also the pleasure to introduce Working Paper 30 on the humanitarian impact of nuclear weapons on behalf of Chile, Costa Rica, Egypt, Holy See, Indonesia, Ireland, Malaysia, Mexico, New Zealand, Nigeria, Philippines, South Africa, Sweden, Switzerland and Austria.

This working Paper provides an account of the developments in the past review cycle with respect to the work on humanitarian consequences. It highlights in particular the growing international focus on the substantive aspects of the humanitarian initiative, through the joint cross-regional statements as well as the three international conferences in Oslo, Nayarit and Vienna and the evidence that was presented there. We consider this focus as key positive development of the past review cycle that we wish to see reflected in the review part of the final document.

In the pursuit of the key objectives of the NPT and the full and effective implementation of the Treaty and the obligations and commitments on nuclear disarmament and non-proliferation reached at the previous Review Conferences, the working paper also makes the following recommendations to the 2015 Review Conference for inclusion in the forward looking part of the final document:

- i. To welcome that during the past review cycle, findings and evidence on the humanitarian impact of nuclear weapons have been presented in fact-based discussions, including at international conferences.
- ii. To recognize that the immediate, mid- and long-term consequences of nuclear weapon detonations inter alia on health, environment, infrastructure, food security, climate, development, social cohesion and the global economy are significantly graver than previously understood, interlinked, and would not be constrained by national borders but have regional or global effects, and may even threaten the survival of humanity.
- iii. To be aware that the risk of a nuclear weapon explosion is significantly greater than previously assumed and is further increasing with proliferation, the lowering of the technical threshold for nuclear weapon capability and with the danger of the access to nuclear weapons and related material by terrorist groups.
- iv. To express dismay at the unacceptable humanitarian consequences of any use of nuclear weapons and to reaffirm the need for all States at all times to comply with applicable international law, including international humanitarian law.

- v. To recognize that new evidence that has emerged about the humanitarian consequences of nuclear weapons casts further doubt on whether these weapons could ever be used in conformity with international law, in particular international humanitarian law.
- vi. To emphasize that the consequences of nuclear weapon detonations and the risks associated with this weaponry concern the security of all humanity.
- vii. To affirm that it is in the interest of the very survival of humanity that nuclear weapons are never used again, under any circumstances.
- viii. To be cognisant of the fact that the risk of nuclear weapons' use can only be avoided through the total elimination of nuclear weapons and maintenance of a world free of nuclear weapons.
- ix. To emphasize that the scope of consequences of a nuclear weapon detonation and risks associated raise profound moral and ethical questions.
- x. To commit to further enhance awareness of the humanitarian impact of and risks associated with nuclear weapons with a view to increasing the urgency with which a world without nuclear weapons is pursued and achieved.
- xi. To call on the nuclear-weapon States, pending the total elimination of their nuclear weapon arsenals, to take concrete interim measures with urgency to reduce the risk of nuclear weapon detonations and to increase their transparency and accountability in this regard.
- xii. To stress that in light of the growing understanding of the risk posed by nuclear weapons and their devastating humanitarian consequences, there is an urgent need for the full implementation of existing obligations under the NPT and its previous Review Conferences to identify and pursue effective measures for the achievement of a world without nuclear weapons, and to call on all States parties to spare no efforts in this regard.

Mr. Chairman,

I would also like to introduce behalf of Austria, Working Paper 29 entitled "The Vienna Conference on the Humanitarian Impact of Nuclear Weapons (8-9 December 2014) and the Austrian Pledge: Input on for the NPT 2015 Review Conference".

With this working paper, Austria wishes to transmit to the NPT Review Conference the substantive conclusions contained in the Chair's Summary of the Vienna Conference.

The discussions and findings with respect to the humanitarian consequences of nuclear weapons, the risks associated with the existence of these weapons, as well as the legal and moral dimension of this weaponry constitute a powerful set of arguments that should lead to an urgent and profound change in the nuclear weapons debate.

Austria also issued a national pledge which highlighted a number of inescapable conclusions that we think need to be drawn from the evidence that has been presented in the course of the humanitarian initiative. Consequently, Austria pledged *inter alia* to

- i. to present the facts-based discussions, findings and compelling evidence of the Vienna Conference, which builds upon the previous conferences in Oslo and Nayarit, to all relevant fora, in particular the NPT Review Conference 2015 and in the UN framework, as they should

- be at the centre of all deliberations, obligations and commitments with regard to nuclear disarmament,
- ii. to call on all States parties to the NPT to renew their commitment to the urgent and full implementation of existing obligations under Article VI, and to this end, to identify and pursue effective measures to fill the legal gap for the prohibition and elimination of nuclear weapons and Austria pledges to cooperate with all stakeholders to achieve this goal,
 - iii. to cooperate with all relevant stakeholders, in efforts to stigmatize, prohibit and eliminate nuclear weapons in light of their unacceptable humanitarian consequences and associated.

Austria is grateful that more than 70 States have decided to support and/or endorse this pledge to date.

Mr Chairman, Austria therefore expects that this Review Conference will put a credible process in place to identify and pursue effective measures to fill the legal gap for the prohibition and elimination of nuclear weapons as required for by Article VI of the NPT.

Thank you