

2020 Review Conference of the Parties to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons

Distr.: General
25 August 2022

Original: English

ADVANCE UNEDITED VERSION

New York, 1–26 August 2022

Joint Humanitarian Statement

Statement submitted by Costa Rica on behalf of 147 States Parties to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons

Delivered by H.E Maritza Chan, Ambassador, Chargé d'affaires, Permanent Mission of Costa Rica to the United Nations. 10th Review Conference of the Parties to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons, New York, August 22, 2022

I am taking the floor on behalf of 147 Member States: Algeria, Andorra, Angola, Antigua and Barbuda, Argentina, Armenia, Austria, Azerbaijan, Bahamas, Bahrain, Bangladesh, Barbados, Belize, Benin, Bhutan, Bolivia, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Botswana, Brazil, Brunei Darussalam, Burkina Faso, Burundi, Cabo Verde, Cambodia, Cameroon, Central African Republic, Chad, Chile, Colombia, Comoros, Congo, Cook Islands, Costa Rica, Côte d'Ivoire, Cuba, Cyprus, Democratic Republic of the Congo, Djibouti, Dominica, Dominican Republic, Ecuador, Egypt, El Salvador, Equatorial Guinea, Eritrea, Eswatini, Ethiopia, Fiji, Gabon, Gambia, Ghana, Greece, Grenada, Guatemala, Guinea, Guinea Bissau, Guyana, Haiti, Honduras, Indonesia, Iran, Iraq, Ireland, Jamaica, Japan, Jordan, Kazakhstan, Kenya, Kiribati, Kuwait, Kyrgyzstan, Lao PDR, Lebanon, Lesotho, Liberia, Libya, Liechtenstein, Madagascar, Malawi, Malaysia, Maldives, Mali, Malta, Marshall Islands, Mauritania, Mauritius, Mexico, Federated States of Micronesia, Republic of Moldova, Mongolia, Morocco, Mozambique, Myanmar, Namibia, Nauru, Nepal, New Zealand, Nicaragua, Niger, Nigeria, Niue, Oman, Palau, State of Palestine, Panama, Papua New Guinea, Paraguay, Peru, Philippines, Qatar, Rwanda, Saint Kitts and Nevis, Saint Lucia, Saint Vincent and the Grenadines, Samoa, San Marino, Sao Tome and Principe, Saudi Arabia, Senegal, Seychelles, Sierra Leone, Singapore, Solomon Islands, South Africa, South Sudan, Sri Lanka, Sudan, Suriname, Switzerland, Tajikistan, Tanzania, Thailand, Timor-Leste, Togo, Tonga, Trinidad and Tobago, Tunisia, Tuvalu, Uganda, United Arab Emirates, Uruguay, Vanuatu, Venezuela, Viet Nam, Yemen, Zambia, Zimbabwe, and my own country, Costa Rica.

1. Our countries are deeply concerned about the catastrophic humanitarian consequences of nuclear weapons. Past experience of the use and testing of nuclear weapons has demonstrated the unacceptable humanitarian and environmental consequences caused by their immense, destructive capability and indiscriminate nature.
2. Fact-based discussions on the humanitarian impacts of nuclear weapons took place at international Conferences convened respectively by Norway in March 2013, Mexico in February 2014, and by Austria in December 2014 and June 2022. These conferences have deepened our collective understanding of the humanitarian impact of nuclear weapons, and a key message from experts and international organisations was that no State, group of States, or indeed the international humanitarian system as a whole, could respond to the immediate humanitarian emergency a nuclear weapon detonation would cause. Nor could they provide adequate assistance to victims.
3. The broad participation at the Humanitarian Impacts Conferences by a majority of States, the ICRC, UN humanitarian organisations and civil society, reflected the recognition that the catastrophic humanitarian consequences of nuclear weapons are a fundamental and global concern. We firmly believe that it is in the interests of all States to engage in discussions on the humanitarian consequences of nuclear weapons to further broaden and deepen understanding. We welcome civil society's ongoing engagement on this matter.

4. This work is essential, because the catastrophic consequences of nuclear weapons affect not only governments, but each and every citizen in our interconnected world. These consequences have deep implications for human survival; for our environment; for socioeconomic development; for our economies; and for the health of future generations. We note, for example, the strongly disproportionate and gendered impacts of exposure to ionizing radiation for women and girls. For these reasons, we firmly believe that awareness of the catastrophic consequences of nuclear weapons must underpin all approaches and efforts towards nuclear disarmament, including in the work of the Tenth Review Conference of the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty (NPT).
5. This is not, of course, a new idea. The appalling humanitarian consequences of nuclear weapons were evident from the moment of their very first use and, from that moment, motivated humanity's aspirations for a world free from this threat. The humanitarian consequences of nuclear weapons are reflected in numerous UN resolutions, including the first resolution passed by the General Assembly in 1946, and in multilateral instruments including the NPT. The world's most eminent nuclear physicists observed as early as 1955 that nuclear weapons threaten the continued existence of mankind and that a war with these weapons could quite possibly put an end to the human race. The First Special Session of the General Assembly devoted to Disarmament (SSOD-1) stressed in 1978 that "nuclear weapons pose the greatest danger to mankind and to the survival of civilisation." These expressions of profound concern remain as compelling as ever.
6. We are therefore encouraged that the renewed humanitarian focus established by the 2010 NPT Review Conference, when States Parties expressed "deep concern at the catastrophic humanitarian consequences of any use of nuclear weapons", is being sustained. Today's statement is further support for that focus.
7. It is in the interest of the very survival of humanity that nuclear weapons are never used again, under any circumstances. The catastrophic effects of a nuclear weapon detonation, whether by accident, miscalculation or design, cannot be adequately addressed. All efforts must be exerted to eliminate the threat of these weapons of mass destruction.
8. The only way to guarantee that nuclear weapons will never be used again is through their total elimination. All States share the responsibility to prevent the use of nuclear weapons, to prevent their vertical and horizontal proliferation and to achieve nuclear disarmament, including through fulfilling the objectives of the NPT and achieving its universality.
9. We welcome the resolve of the international community, together with the ICRC and international humanitarian organisations, to address the catastrophic humanitarian consequences of nuclear weapons. By raising awareness about this issue, civil society has a crucial role to play side-by-side with governments as we fulfil our responsibilities. We owe it to future generations to work together to do just that, and in doing so to rid our world of the threat posed by nuclear weapons.
