

**PANW 2010 National conference**

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**Freeing our world from nuclear weapons:  
negotiate a nuclear weapons abolition treaty - now**

It is an honour to be invited to address you today and a privilege to be with you among friends again sharing the most vital and noble cause. I chair the IPPNW Working Group on the International Campaign to Abolish Nuclear Weapons – ICAN - and also ICAN Australia, and was elected as SE Asia-Pacific vice-president of IPPNW at the world congress in Basel last month.

By way of background, the International Campaign to Abolish Nuclear Weapons – ICAN – was established at the 2006 IPPNW congress in Helsinki. ICAN embodies and takes forward the essential core, unfulfilled mission for which IPPNW was established 30 years ago, and aims to link us more effectively with wider civil society partners. I believe that with our united efforts and those of our many partners, we can seize a historic opportunity to make a decisive difference towards eradicating nuclear weapons from our world.

ICAN was born out the inspiration of the remarkable success of the ICBL. It was also born out dismay and alarm at the complete failure of the 2005 NPT Review Conference and the World Summit of over 100 heads of state which followed, in the face of growing nuclear dangers, to agree anything at all towards eradicating nuclear weapons. We were convinced that a new approach was needed, and incremental business as usual was a recipe for an inexorable slide towards nuclear catastrophe. I want to honour Dr Ron McCoy from Malaysia who first proposed ICAN.

ICAN strives for abolition of nuclear weapons through a comprehensive global treaty. ICAN works to educate, engage and mobilise civil society as well as directly with governments. ICAN is not an organisation but a campaign – aimed to be lean, focussed, adaptable, open, inclusive, flexible and networked. We want nuclear weapons to be outlawed and eliminated not 'in some century', but in our lifetime. We know this is necessary, feasible and urgent. We want multilateral negotiations on a global abolition treaty to start, now. We do not see merit in

being too prescriptive or rigid about exactly how a global ban on nuclear weapons should be developed. And we certainly should not be constrained by the NPT, Conference on Disarmament and other processes that are so bogged down and constrained. What we want to do is put heat under decision makers to encourage or compel them to act. We want to encourage, assist and work closely with those governments that will take the lead.

As Albert Einstein said:

“There is no secret and there is no defense; there is no possibility of control except through the aroused understanding and insistence of the peoples of the world.”

The Swiss foreign minister made the kind of enlightened and visionary statement to the recent IPPNW congress in Basel that one would like to hear from every government. Micheline Calmy-Rey said:

“The world still lives under the Damocles’ sword of nuclear weapons. These weapons could, within minutes, destroy everything we value: our lives, our environment, our culture, our children and grandchildren’s future. As long as these weapons exist, the dangers remain of wilful or accidental use, or of theft and use by terrorists. It is thus a matter of reason and responsibility to work towards the elimination of nuclear weapons. Physicians have a special mission to preserve human life. I commend International Physicians for the Prevention of Nuclear War for pursuing their vocation not only in their daily work in practices and hospitals but also at the political level. Governments need the constant and constructive input of civil society.”

Over the past 4 years since Helsinki, through the work of many, there have been important achievements through ICAN.

1. The model Nuclear Weapons Convention was updated, re-published and promoted. It is widely regarded as the most thoughtful and detailed effort to define all the key elements of the legal agreements needed to achieve and sustain a world freed from nuclear weapons and how they might fit together. It is not a take it or leave it package deal. The legal architecture that will eventually outlaw and eliminate nuclear weapons may look quite different. However it is a serious effort to apply the lessons of successful disarmament treaties like START, the INF Treaty, and the Chemical Weapons Convention to define and link

in a comprehensive treaty the requirements to achieve and sustain a world free of nuclear weapons. It provides a checklist. A comprehensive treaty has been the way real progress has been made on all other inhumane and indiscriminate weapons. It applies the same approach to nuclear weapons. It clearly demonstrates that abolition is achievable. Do not tell me this cannot be done – here is how it could be done. The model NWC is strongly promoted by UN Secretary General Ban Ki-Moon as a good point of departure for states to fulfil their nuclear disarmament obligation.

2. Internationally and in some countries, we have build partnerships with many, diverse organisations. More than 200 international organisations have become partners in ICAN. Mayors for Peace was the first. In Norway, more than 40 organisations have become ICAN partners. In Australia, our 60 partners include all the major environment organisations, churches, trade unions, professional and women’s associations, indigenous organisations, political parties, the UN Association and Oxfam. We believe that great strength lies in coordinated and consistent priorities and messages among as many diverse civil society partners as possible. Different voices in different places with the same message: negotiate a nuclear weapons abolition treaty now. A key part of multiplying our efforts is to convince organisations who do not have nuclear weapons at the core of their work that advocating nuclear weapons abolition is something they should do.

Because nuclear weapons threaten everyone and everything – they are the ultimate humanitarian, faith, human rights, sustainability, social justice, development, ethical and environmental issue. They are everyone’s business. And so there is great scope to expand our partners.

3. We were able to convince the International Commission on Nuclear Non-proliferation and Disarmament chaired by Gareth Evans and Kawaguchi Yoriko from initially being extremely negative about a NWC, to seeing it as the most logical and practical way to achieve both disarmament and non-proliferation. Work on a NWC is one of the 2 key roles the Commission envisages for the Global Centre on Nuclear Non-proliferation and Disarmament it hopes to establish. We were similarly

able to convince a number of political parties and former heads of state, including the Interaction Council, including former Japanese prime ministers Murayama and Fukuda.

4. But I think the most telling measure that the time is right for ICAN and for going all out now is what happened at the NPT Review Conference in May, where the NWC came in from the cold, from the political fringe firmly into the mainstream. Talk may be cheap, and if pious words alone could abolish nuclear weapons the job would have been finished long ago. But an unprecedented majority, according to the Norwegian Foreign Ministry, 147 of the world's governments expressing support for a nuclear weapons abolition treaty, is a seismic shift.

This provides a vital platform to now move beyond the ineffectual and moribund NPT to what can deliver on its promise: a comprehensive, verifiable, binding, irreversible, phased, global nuclear abolition treaty. The argument that a NWC will distract from and undermine the NPT is finished. It makes clear that a NWC is needed not only for disarmament but for non-proliferation and nuclear security. It means we need to work fast and hard to build civil society pressure for action, and work more strategically with those governments that will or can be convinced to take the lead on a nuclear weapons ban. All governments have a responsibility to act, however the ICAN Working Group meeting in Basel felt that key governments for our efforts include those of Austria, Norway and Switzerland, Germany, Egypt (which at the NPT RevCon played the most important role of any state without nuclear weapons), Nigeria, South Africa, Chile, India, Indonesia, Russia and Japan.

What are some of the key lessons of the landmines and cluster munitions treaties and some key starting points for our work to free our world from nuclear weapons?

1. The ICBL and Cluster Munition Coalition combined national and international civil society partners, international organisations like the Red Cross and UNICEF, and initially just a few small but key governments; helped by a highly visible charismatic advocate in Princess Diana. They were effective despite opposition from the largest countries including China, Russia and US; and were influential through norms and what was

politically feasible even on landmine users and manufacturers not formally party to the treaties. The establishment of the International Criminal Court tells a similar story. Both ICBL and CMC are flexible open networks that bring together but don't duplicate established organisations.

2. While the states that have given up nuclear weapons and nuclear weapons programs provide important examples, there are powerful forces and vested interests that make the states that still possess nuclear weapons hold tightly onto them. The huge political significance and status attached to nuclear weapons by some is divorced from the horrendous reality of what they do. Nuclear weapons are the most macho thing for a state or terrorist to brandish. There are substantial bureaucratic, military, technocratic and corporate vested interests in the bloated and opaque nuclear weapons complex, which have been thrown vast resources over many decades.

Conventional wisdom is that unless all the possessing states are on board, forget abolition. That may be true in the end, but not initially. We cannot simply wait for states with nuclear weapons to decide to give them up. Leadership can come – indeed is more likely to come, from states without nuclear weapons. Much of the work of building a global abolition treaty and support for it can be done by states without nuclear weapons. Those in a nuclear alliance, like yours and mine, could also be leaders, and bear particular responsibility.

3. The capacity to build nuclear weapons is inextricably entwined with nuclear reactors and nuclear power generation – particularly uranium enrichment and spent fuel reprocessing capacity. This adds a major obstacle and source of delay and complexity to nuclear abolition. It will not be possible to eliminate nuclear weapons without substantial reorganisation of the broad nuclear industry. This needs to be addressed now.

The International Panel on Fissile Materials puts it this way:

“If civilian nuclear power is not phased out, it is important to limit to the extent possible national nuclear fuel cycle facilities.

Reprocessing plants, by producing nuclear weapon material directly or nearly directly, present the greatest dangers in a nuclear weapon-free world. They provide the most plausible route to get

weapon-usable material, and they shorten the time for a breakout to days or weeks. Other countries with similar plants could respond by a similar breakout also in a short time. The speed of such breakouts would give little time for collective responses under the United Nations Charter, including international sanctions and other actions. Given this situation, serious consideration should be given to the possibility of phasing out reprocessing plants altogether. In principle, this should not be a difficult decision, since reprocessing will not be necessary or economic for the foreseeable future. ...

... as an adjunct to any nuclear disarmament treaty, it would be essential to create international institutions to operate and safeguard both enrichment and reprocessing plants (if they cannot be eliminated altogether) and spent fuel storage sites. Such a system should be established during the lengthy transition period to disarmament by moving as many parts of the fuel cycle as possible from national to multinational and preferably international control.

Even with stringent and equitable new rules to govern nuclear power, its continued operation and certainly any global expansion will impose serious proliferation risks in the transition to nuclear disarmament. A phase-out of civilian nuclear energy would provide the most effective and enduring constraint on proliferation risks in a nuclear weapon-free world. ...”

4. 65 years into the nuclear age, we need a clear and compelling focus on achieving a world freed from nuclear weapons, which can inspire people and mobilise political will. The incremental, step by painful step, agenda which has dominated disarmament and arms control debates has been used to obfuscate, distract and delay by those without serious intent to disarm. Many disarmament-dedicated organisations have been drawn into a kind of ‘disarmament ghetto’ trap. An example is the CTBT, which for years was a core IPPNW priority. Although beneficial to reduce testing-related radioactive contamination, because of computer simulation and hydrodynamic and other types of testing, it is no longer a powerful disarmament or non-proliferation measure.

We should be bold and impatient. It is not our job to figure out the minutiae of negotiating processes. It is up to us to encourage, assist and compel our governments to get on with the job, and watch and push them at every step.

What are the essential requirements for a world freed from nuclear weapons?

They include:

- Disarmament which is binding, universally applied, verified, irreversible and phased
- Outlawing any use of nuclear weapons as a crime against humanity and a war crime
- Controlling weapons-usable fissile materials – ending their production, eliminating them wherever possible, and securing them under strict international control

What then would an Australian or Japanese government really serious about walking the talk on abolishing nuclear weapons do?

- It would invest high priority and resources to work with like-minded governments around the world to begin negotiations on a global abolition treaty
- it would re-negotiate its alliance with the United States to ensure that its policies, personnel and facilities could not in any way sanction or contribute to possible use of nuclear weapons
- it would preferably phase out or drastically limit uranium mining to internationally supervised essential scientific, medical, industrial purposes
- it would phase out nuclear power generation and invest massively in energy efficiency and benign, sustainable energy – wind, solar photovoltaic and thermal, geothermal, wave, tidal, biodiesel and biogas
- it would stop reprocessing of spent reactor fuel and eliminate or secure its plutonium stockpile
- Like the Norwegian government pension fund, it would not invest government funds in companies involved in making nuclear weapons

Are your or my governments doing any of these? The evidence indicates they are not yet serious.

Former Foreign Minister Okada's recent joint Wall St Journal op-ed with German Foreign minister Guido Westerwelle provides a welcome expression of support for

a world without nuclear weapons. But pious words are not enough. We have heard them for too long. We are drowning in them. The Ministers commit to nothing other than being ready to discuss with the nuclear-armed states including the US how to reduce the role of nuclear weapons. But they affirm the dangerous mantra of nuclear deterrence. In reality this means an illegal and immoral preparedness to use nuclear weapons and risk incinerating millions. It depends on continual deployment of nuclear weapons. It is misleadingly used to justify high alert status and modernisation of nuclear weapons. It continually risks nuclear war by technical or human failure. It is unsustainable and inconsistent. How can Japan deny nuclear weapons to any other country while it claims protection from them? Deterrence drives proliferation. It invites the targeting of Japan by others with nuclear weapons. Historian Lawrence Wittner's research demonstrates that use of nuclear weapons has been prevented much more often by civil society pressure making their use politically unacceptable, than by deterrence. Even if it works a bit, it will not prevent nuclear war in the long term, and it only needs to fail once to have failed utterly and create firestorms and radioactive wasteland.

I'd like now to commend for your consideration some tasks on IPPNW's core mission of nuclear weapons abolition when you return home from this conference.

First, pressure your government to support a NWC, and get your country's officials and diplomats cracking on working with other governments on early commencement of negotiations on a global nuclear weapons abolition treaty. Meet officials as high up as possible, and visit them again, and again. From all parties. Write to them. Invite them to speak on nuclear weapons abolition. Urge them to establish a parliamentary inquiry into how your government can best work for nuclear weapons abolition.

Second, build partnership. Encourage and assist diverse civil society organisations to support nuclear weapons abolition through a binding treaty. Doctors and other health professionals enjoy wide respect and have convening power to bring others together, and often have easier access to political leaders than others. Use it. Invite other organisations to join delegations, roundtables, events. Speak at their conferences. The broad civil society network established in Japan around the ICNND has been very useful. ICAN materials, the Swedish IPPNW's Learn About Nuclear Weapons, the student Nuclear Weapons Inheritance Project materials, may be helpful. Please include a link to ICAN on your organisation homepage.

There is great scope to strengthen partnerships with humanitarian, development, environment, human rights and many other organisations.

In April president of the International Committee of the Red Cross Jakob Kellenberger signalled that the Red Cross movement is now giving priority to making the humanitarian case against nuclear weapons.

“Already on 5 September 1945 the ICRC publicly expressed the wish that nuclear weapons be banned. ...

Nuclear weapons are unique in their destructive power, in the unspeakable human suffering they cause, in the impossibility of controlling their effects in space and time, in the risks of escalation they create, and in the threat they pose to the environment, to future generations, and indeed to the survival of humanity. ...

In the view of the ICRC, preventing the use of nuclear weapons requires fulfilment of existing obligations to pursue negotiations aimed at prohibiting and completely eliminating such weapons through a legally binding international treaty.”

This important and extremely welcome commitment is beginning to be embraced by national Red Cross societies around the world. Senior Red Cross staff were active participants in the Basel congress. There is now a wonderful opportunity for IPPNW and other ICAN partners to contact their Red Cross/Red Crescent/Red Diamond national society, congratulate them on this development, and explore working with them to make the humanitarian case against nuclear weapons and the need for an abolition treaty. Offer to give their staff a presentation on the medical dimensions of nuclear weapons.

The recent unchallenged findings of some of the world’s best climate scientists have shown that a regional nuclear war between India and Pakistan involving 100 Hiroshima size weapons – less than 0.07% of the explosive yield of the global nuclear arsenal and just 0.4% of the nuclear of nuclear weapons – would cause global darkening and cooling which would persist for at least a decade, disrupt agriculture around the globe, and cause starvation around the world on a scale never seen before. These findings demand attention. Such consequences are within the capacity of all of the nuclear armed states except for North Korea. A war in the Middle East involving Israel’s nuclear weapons could do the same. The policy implications of these findings are profound. Governments have largely been

in denial about them and not even yet even themselves validated or extended the research. Yet this evidence makes it clear that nuclear weapons pose an extreme threat every day to everyone, all over the world; that all have a vital stake and responsibility; that nuclear weapons reductions on the scale envisaged under the NewSTART treaty do not materially reduce the danger, and that abolishing nuclear weapons as a matter of great urgency is the only appropriate policy response.

Let me share with you some of the results of the research and commend Prof Alan Robock's website, where you can access excellent updated publications and powerpoint resources.

Third, urge your national medical or student association to pass a resolution calling for the speedy removal of highly enriched uranium (HEU) – directly usable in the simplest kind of nuclear weapons most attractive to non-state groups – from the production of medical isotopes. IPPNW's campaign to remove HEU from medical isotope production has been effective, with many producers switching away from HEU or committed to doing so. But important work remains to be done, particularly in the US and Europe. Urge your hospital or nuclear medicine service to preferentially source their isotopes from a provider who does not use HEU. Until Japan's own medical isotope production is established, these include Australia and South Africa.

Fourth, consider using the MillionPleas campaign as a way to engage with civil society organisations, schools, prominent individuals and the mass media. We were fortunate to partner with a large international advertising agency, TBWA, to harness pro-bono a little of the enormous resources of the advertising industry and its ability to reach vast numbers of people. This campaign was launched on the 65<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the Hiroshima and Nagasaki nuclear bombings. It aims to utilise the web and social e-media to create the world's longest video chain letter, with individual faces and voices, calling for nuclear weapons abolition. It is a way to connect especially young people with a simple means join others all over the world to show their support for a global abolition treaty, and to learn more about what they can do. I'd like to show you a 60 sec TV commercial introducing MillionPleas. The English version was broadcast on 4 national TV networks in Australia.

Negotiations on a nuclear weapons abolition treaty should begin, now. They should be continued without interruption until a global treaty to eliminate and

outlaw nuclear weapons is concluded. As for chemical and biological weapons, landmines and cluster munitions, abolition of nuclear weapons requires a comprehensive, equitable treaty enshrining one standard for all – zero nuclear weapons.

There is now a historic opportunity for leaders of courage and vision to craft a negotiating process for a nuclear weapons abolition treaty. We need to make leaders feel real heat that they must grasp the nettle. Through leadership and partnerships such as using ICAN we can greatly multiply our collective efforts and help build a united, irresistible chorus of voices of people around our earth.

The World Health Assembly in 1983 concluded that nuclear weapons constitute the greatest immediate threat to the health and welfare of humankind. This threat is not only to humans, but the very capacity of our earth to support complex life is in jeopardy. The medical prescription is clear: negotiating a nuclear weapons abolition treaty is the most urgent priority for global health.

I'd like to finish with part of the official memorandum of conversation between President Ronald Reagan and General Secretary Mikhail Gorbachev at their summit meeting in Reykjavik, Iceland, on 12 October 1986, when, for a moment, they appeared to have agreed to the elimination of all their nuclear weapons within ten years.

“Ten years from now, [President Reagan] would be a very old man. He and Gorbachev would come to Iceland and each of them would bring the last nuclear missile from each country with them. And they would give a tremendous party for the whole world ... He would be very old by then, and Gorbachev would not recognise him. The President would say, 'Hello Mikhail.' And Gorbachev would say, 'Ron, is it you?' And then they would destroy the last missiles.”

I can, you can, we can abolish nuclear weapons.

Let's go!

Thank you.