

NWC

NOW WE CAN



Global Action Agenda February–June 2010

There is a new window of opportunity to abolish nuclear weapons, but it might not last long, which is why we must act now. Only with your help can we make abolition a reality. Here's what we're asking you to do.

This May key decision makers representing 189 countries — almost every country in the world — will gather in New York for a major review of the nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty (NPT). Together, we have the power to influence the outcome.

The last such review took place in 2005, and nothing was achieved —

states were unable to agree on any course of action. Let's make sure that this year's review is different.

What would that involve? The International Campaign to Abolish Nuclear Weapons (ICAN) — a global grassroots movement representing 200 civil society groups — is calling for countries to begin negotiations for a new treaty known as a Nuclear Weapons Convention.

We believe that this is the best way to implement the NPT's disarmament and non-proliferation obligations, and realize the decades-old promise

of a nuclear-weapon-free world.

The convention would outlaw the development, testing, possession and use of nuclear weapons, and establish the system needed to achieve their prompt elimination.

The upcoming NPT Review Conference, from 3 to 28 May, is a great opportunity to get the process started. We're asking you to take two actions to help convince your government to get behind the idea. You don't need to be a policy expert — just a citizen who cares about the future of the planet.

Action 1 — Lobby

WHAT: Lobby for a Nuclear Weapons Convention

WHEN: Before and during the NPT Review Conference

WHERE: Globally, at foreign ministries and the United Nations

Action 2 — Protest

WHAT: Hold an event on Nuclear Abolition Day — 5 June

WHEN: On 5 June, the Saturday after the NPT Review Conference

WHERE: Globally, in towns, cities and at nuclear facilities

Lobbying for abolition

Before the NPT Review Conference in May, it's vital that we make a united effort to convince our governments to support a Nuclear Weapons Convention. Many of your country's negotiating positions will be determined before the conference even starts, which is why it's so important that you begin now.

ICAN has produced a number of resources — and will produce more over coming months — to help familiarize you with the idea of a Nuclear Weapons Convention and why it's the most realistic path to a nuclear-weapon-free world. The last two pages of this document provide some basic information to help you in your lobbying efforts.

Organizing a meeting

We encourage you to meet with a representative from your Foreign Ministry (or State Department). If you can meet with the Foreign Minister (or Secretary of State) that's great, but if not it's very useful to meet with the people who will be in charge of preparations for the Non-Proliferation Treaty Review Conference. They may already be informed about the proposal for a Nuclear Weapons Convention, but don't take that for granted!

You may like to provide the representatives with our Nuclear Weapons Convention briefing paper (www.icanw.org/files/brief.pdf) and a copy of the Model Nuclear Weapons Convention available on

our website (www.icanw.org). Another helpful document is the UN Secretary-General's five-point plan, which calls on governments to consider a Nuclear Weapons Convention as a way of fulfilling the disarmament obligation contained in the Non-Proliferation Treaty.

What to ask for

You could ask your government for a number of things, depending on how receptive it is to the idea. For example, you could ask it to include in its official statements at the NPT Review Conference an expression of support for the commencement of negotiations on a Nuclear Weapons Convention, or that it submit a working paper to

the conference presenting proposals for preparatory work on a Nuclear Weapons Convention. This could be undertaken at a high-level meeting of like-minded states convened in the near future.

Need any help?

ICAN has experts who are able to offer you advice before you approach your government. Please email Tim Wright (tim@icanw.org) to be put in touch with a good person. And we'd love to find out how things go, so please keep us updated.

ACTION 1

Lobby your government

WHAT: Lobby for a Nuclear Weapons Convention

WHEN: Before and during the NPT Review Conference

WHERE: Globally, at foreign ministries and the United Nations





A global day of action

On 5 June 2010, thousands of people across the world will take part in coordinated local events to mark Nuclear Abolition Day. Our message is simple: it's time for governments to begin negotiating a Nuclear Weapons Convention to ban nuclear weapons.

In some countries, protests will take place outside government buildings or at nuclear facilities.

The purpose of the actions, whether they're large or small, is to demonstrate in a visible way that there's strong popular support for a Nuclear Weapons Convention.

Use the letters 'NWC'

We encourage you to help unify our protests by forming the letters "NWC" — standing for "Nuclear Weapons Convention" and "Now We Can" — in whatever way you like. It could be a human formation, a candlelight formation, or simply a large banner. Think creatively! Another idea is to dress up as nuclear bomb victims to vividly shock people into thinking about what nuclear weapons would do to us. Be sure to provide some explanation.

Take a photo or video of your event and we'll add it to our website! You should also send it to your government representatives, along with an explanation of why a Nuclear Weapons Convention is so important.

Why 5 June?

June 5 is the Saturday one week after the end of the NPT Review Conference. It will be an opportunity to respond to the conference outcome. If it fails, as it did in 2005, then our events will be an urgent plea for countries to begin working for a Nuclear Weapons Convention. If it succeeds, it will be an opportunity for us to build on the enthusiasm for abolition generated at the conference and encourage prompt action. Either

way, our events will be well timed to effect change.

June 5 is also the annual World Environment Day. Nuclear weapons, like climate change, threaten the very future of the planet. We must tackle both with great passion.

Tips for organizing

- **Register the action:** The first step is to register your protest. Email tim@icanw.org and we'll add the details to our website.
- **Publicize the protest:** Produce a flyer or posters to inform people about the protest, and publicize it through your networks. Get other groups involved in the process too!

ACTION 2

Organize an event

WHAT: Hold an event on Nuclear Abolition Day — 5 June
WHEN: On 5 June, the Saturday after the NPT Review Conference
WHERE: Globally — in towns, cities and at nuclear facilities

What is a Nuclear Weapons Convention?

A Nuclear Weapons Convention is a proposed treaty banning the development, testing, production, stockpiling, transfer, use and threat of use of nuclear weapons. It would also prohibit the production of weapons-grade fissile materials — highly enriched uranium and separated plutonium — and require nuclear weapons delivery vehicles to be destroyed or converted.

Parties would be required to declare all of their nuclear weapons, nuclear material, nuclear facilities and delivery vehicles. They would then be required to destroy their nuclear arsenals according to a

series of phases, for example, taking the weapons off high alert status, removing them from deployment, removing the warheads from their delivery vehicles, disabling the warheads, and placing all fissile material under international control.

In the initial phases of implementing the convention, the United States and Russia — which possess roughly 95 per cent of all nuclear weapons in the world — would be required to make the deepest cuts. An international monitoring system would be created to verify compliance. An agency would have the authority to conduct surprise inspections of nuclear facilities, and citizen whistleblowers would be afforded legal protection.

Why is it the best path to abolition?

The current step-by-step approach to nuclear disarmament has failed. Forty years after the NPT entered into force, there are still more than 20,000 nuclear weapons in the world, and many are maintained on hair-trigger alert. None of the nuclear-weapon countries appears to be preparing for a future without them. The need for a comprehensive approach is clear. Non-proliferation, disarmament, and nuclear safety and security can only be achieved by tackling them together. As with biological and chemical weapons, an abolition treaty is the most practical way to do this.

Where does the NPT fit in with this?

The NPT was the result of a bargain struck between the nuclear-haves and nuclear-have-nots in 1968. Countries with nuclear weapons agreed to give them up if the countries without them agreed never to acquire them. But these commitments have not been universally honoured. North Korea has developed nuclear weapons (and Israel, India and Pakistan outside the treaty), and the nuclear-weapon countries continue to cling firmly to their arsenals. The challenge now is to ensure that both the non-proliferation and disarmament provisions of the treaty are implemented without further delay. *(Continued next page.)*

The NWC

What is it?

‘We are told by some governments that a Nuclear Weapons Convention is premature and unlikely. Don’t believe it. We were told the same thing about a mine ban treaty.’

– Jody Williams, Nobel Peace Prize winner



A growing number of countries are saying that the best way to achieve that is through a legally binding, verifiable and irreversible Nuclear Weapons Convention. The UN Secretary-General has proposed a convention as the first point in his five-point plan for a nuclear-weapon-free world. The NPT Conference in New York this May will provide states with the ideal opportunity to put in motion the process for such a treaty.

Is there support for a convention?

Each year roughly two-thirds of all nations vote in favour of a UN General Assembly resolution that calls for the early commencement

of negotiations on a Nuclear Weapons Convention. Among them are four nuclear-armed states: China, India, Pakistan and North Korea. The Weapons of Mass Destruction Commission (2006) and International Commission on Nuclear Non-Proliferation and Disarmament (2009) have also expressed support for the idea of a convention.

In 2008 the Global Zero campaign commissioned opinion polls in 21 countries which showed that roughly 76 per cent of people globally would be happy for their governments to work with other governments in reaching a binding agreement to abolish nuclear weapons within a specified time frame. The vast majority of civil society groups

working in the field of nuclear non-proliferation and disarmament are now convinced that a Nuclear Weapons Convention is our best hope of achieving abolition.

What would the convention look like?

That will depend on what agreement states can reach. Civil society groups have produced a model Nuclear Weapons Convention to stimulate discussion. Costa Rica and Malaysia submitted it to the United Nations in 2007, and it is now available on the ICAN website (www.icanw.org) in eight languages: Arabic, Chinese, English, French, German, Norwegian, Russian and Spanish.

The barriers to the successful negotiation of a Nuclear Weapons Convention are primarily political, not technical. With public mobilization across the world, we can build enough pressure on governments to make abolition a reality. Similar conventions have already outlawed other classes of weapons: biological weapons, chemical weapons, anti-personnel landmines and cluster munitions. Surely it is time to ban the most destructive weapons of all. A Nuclear Weapons Convention is not only possible; it is necessary and increasingly urgent. Let's make it happen. NWC — Now We Can! Good luck with your lobbying and protesting.



135 Number of countries now supporting a Nuclear Weapons Convention

Source: UNGA Resolution 64/55