

Humanitarian conference on nuclear weapons to take place in 2013

OSLO – The International Campaign to Abolish Nuclear Weapons (ICAN) warmly welcomes the announcement by Norwegian Foreign Minister Jonas Gahr Støre that Norway will host a meeting in Oslo in 2013 on the humanitarian consequences of nuclear weapons.

Referring to the increasing momentum towards a ban on nuclear weapons, including the resolution “Working towards the elimination of nuclear weapons” adopted at the Red Cross/Red Crescent’s Council of Delegates meeting last November, Mr Støre announced on Tuesday to the Norwegian parliament that “a conference in Oslo to highlight different aspects of nuclear weapons as a humanitarian problem” is scheduled to take place next spring.

The Chair of ICAN, Dr Tilman Ruff, welcomed the announcement, saying that it “demonstrates that governments are still prepared to rise to the challenge posed by nuclear weapons for our societies, our environment and our security. All governments, whether or not they own nuclear weapons, share a responsibility to remove this common danger”.

“This is a critical moment for nuclear prohibition,” said Dr Ruff. “The humanitarian impact of nuclear weapons has too often been put at the margins of nuclear disarmament, privileging a security-centered debate. It is high time that states start to consider the real catastrophic humanitarian consequences of any use of nuclear weapons.”

Noting that this is a good opportunity for policymakers from different countries to come together, ICAN Norway campaign coordinator Magnus Løvold said: “This should not be just another diplomatic meeting, but should lead to a clear road map for a new humanitarian and legal standard. ICAN calls on Norway and the other participating governments to use the meeting as a stepping stone towards negotiations for a treaty to ban nuclear weapons.”

Dr Ruff concluded: “The International Campaign to Abolish Nuclear Weapons, a coalition representing more than 200 member NGOs present in 60 countries worldwide, fully endorses this initiative and is committed to mobilizing public support around the world to encourage such a process.”