

Nuclear Weapons Ban Treaty Negotiations Show Significant Progress

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This week, negotiations on a treaty to ban nuclear weapons in international law began in New York. This first negotiation session revealed that the more than 132 countries participating share a vision for a world without nuclear weapons. And while some disagreement is expected, there was broad agreement among many countries on most elements of the proposed treaty.

Most noticeable was a clear focus on the humanitarian costs of nuclear weapons and the unacceptability of weapons designed to indiscriminately kill civilians.

Executive Director of ICAN, Beatrice Fihn, said *“We made exciting progress this week in our campaign to close the gap in international law and ban nuclear weapons. No one was distracted by the opposition. We look forward to closely reviewing the draft text.”*

Nuclear weapons are intended to kill civilians by the millions. Civilized people no longer believe that is acceptable behavior. It is time to place nuclear weapons alongside chemical and biological weapons, as relics we have evolved beyond. Banning these weapons in international law is a logical first step to eliminating them altogether.”

With the support of more than 120 countries, the UN General Assembly approved the negotiation of a treaty banning nuclear weapons in October of 2016. This first session was designed to gather input from participating countries. The President of the Conference will produce a draft text in the coming weeks and final negotiations on that text will happen in from mid-June through July 7th.

“Every country has a stake in nuclear weapons, not just the nuclear-armed countries. The impact of nuclear war or even accidental explosion knows no political boundary. These weapons threaten everyone’s security,” **Executive Director Fihn said.**

Discussions this week focused on three topics: The goals, objectives, and preamble of the treaty; the details of what actions will be included in a prohibition, such as the possession, development, testing, and use of nuclear weapons and assisting other countries with them, as well as what actions will be required of parties; and legalities for such things as accession to the treaty, regular review conferences, and questions about the accession of nuclear-armed states.

Detailed materials on these topics can be found at <http://www.icanw.org/> and in ICAN briefing papers: <http://www.icanw.org/campaign-news/negotiations/>

It is expected that the final treaty will legally bind parties from using, possessing, and developing nuclear weapons, and assisting others in those activities, working in concert with the existing

regime of nonproliferation and disarmament agreements to hasten a world without nuclear weapons.

“Banning these weapons should be the first step to eliminating them. The treaty we expect from this week’s work will impact the behavior of both those who join it and the nuclear-armed countries which do not. Just as with chemical weapons, land mines, or cluster munitions, creating new international norms will change every state’s behavior. It is time to bring an end to the nuclear age.” Fihn said.

About ICAN. The International Campaign to Abolish Nuclear Weapons (ICAN) is a global campaign coalition working to mobilize people in all countries to inspire, persuade and pressure their governments to prohibit nuclear weapons.

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