

Draft Vienna Declaration of the 1st Meeting of States Parties of the Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons

“Our Commitment to a World Free of Nuclear Weapons”

1. We, the States Parties to the Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons, have gathered here for the first Meeting of States Parties, to mark the Treaty’s entry into force, to reaffirm our determination to realize the complete elimination of nuclear weapons and to chart our path forward for the full and effective implementation of the Treaty. We welcome the broad participation of signatory states and observers, as well as other observers, civil society representatives and survivors of nuclear weapons use and testing.

2. We celebrate the entry into force of the Treaty on 22 January 2021. Nuclear weapons are now explicitly and comprehensively prohibited by international law, as has long been the case for biological and chemical weapons. We welcome that the Treaty fills this gap in the international legal regime against weapons of mass destruction and reaffirm the need for all states to comply at all times with applicable international law, including international humanitarian law.

3. We reiterate the moral and ethical imperatives which inspired and motivated the creation of the Treaty and which now drive and guide its implementation:

- That the establishment of a legally binding prohibition on nuclear weapons constitutes a fundamental step towards the irreversible, verifiable and transparent elimination of nuclear weapons needed for the achievement and maintenance of a world free of nuclear weapons and, hence, for the realization of the purposes and principles of the Charter of the United Nations.

- That the catastrophic humanitarian consequences of nuclear weapons cannot be adequately addressed, transcend national borders, pose grave implications for human survival and well-being and are incompatible with respect for the right to life. They inflict destruction, death and displacement, as well as profound long-term damage to the environment, socioeconomic and sustainable development, the global economy, food security and the health of current and future generations, including with regard to the disproportionate impacts they have on women and girls.

- That all states share the responsibility to achieve nuclear disarmament, to prevent the proliferation of nuclear weapons in all its aspects, to prevent any use or threat of use of nuclear weapons and, to assist victims, redress the harms and remediate the environmental damage caused by previous use and testing of nuclear armed states in accordance with their respective obligations under international law and bilateral agreements.

- That the risk of a nuclear weapon detonation by accident, miscalculation or design concerns the security of all humanity and achieving and maintaining a nuclear-weapon-free world serves both national and collective security interests.

● That the risks posed to all humanity by the existence of nuclear weapons are, thus, so grave that immediate action is needed to achieve a world without nuclear weapons. This is the only way to guarantee that they are never used again, under any circumstances. We cannot afford to wait.

4. We are alarmed and dismayed by threats to use nuclear weapons and increasingly strident nuclear rhetoric. We stress that any use or threat of use of nuclear weapons is a violation of international law, including the Charter of the United Nations. We condemn unequivocally any and all nuclear threats, whether they be explicit or implicit and irrespective of the circumstances.

5. Far from preserving peace and security, nuclear weapons are used as instruments of policy, linked to coercion, intimidation and heightening of tensions. This highlights now more than ever the fallacy of nuclear deterrence doctrines, which are based and rely on the threat of the actual use of nuclear weapons and, hence, the risks of the destruction of countless lives, of societies, of nations, and of inflicting global catastrophic consequences. We thus insist that, pending the total elimination of nuclear weapons, all nuclear-armed states never use or threaten to use these weapons under any circumstances.

6. We remain gravely concerned that nine states still possess between them approximately 13,000 nuclear weapons and by security doctrines, which set out rationales for the use or threat of use of nuclear weapons. Many of these weapons are on high alert and ready to be launched within minutes. We are further concerned that some non-nuclear armed states continue to advocate for nuclear deterrence and encourage the ongoing possession of nuclear weapons. Growing instability and outright conflict greatly exacerbate the risks that these weapons will be used, whether deliberately or by accident or miscalculation. The existence of nuclear weapons diminishes and threatens the common security of all states; indeed, it threatens our very survival.

7. We regret and are deeply concerned that despite the terrible risks, and despite their legal obligations and political commitments to disarm, none of the nuclear-armed states and their allies under the nuclear umbrella are taking any serious steps to reduce their reliance on nuclear weapons. Instead, all nuclear-armed states are spending vast sums to maintain, modernize, upgrade or expand their nuclear arsenals and are placing a greater emphasis on and increasing the role of nuclear weapons in security doctrines. We strongly call for an immediate end to these disconcerting trends. We underscore that these resources could be better utilized for sustainable development.

8. In these circumstances, the Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons is needed more than ever. We will move forward with its implementation, with the aim of further stigmatizing and de-legitimizing nuclear weapons and steadily building a robust global peremptory norm against them.

9. Together, we are developing the mechanisms of the Treaty. We will discharge our national obligations in full. We will work in partnership with the United Nations, the International Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement, other international and regional organizations, the International Campaign to Abolish Nuclear

Weapons and other non-governmental organizations, religious leaders, parliamentarians, academics, indigenous peoples, victims of the use of nuclear weapons (hibakusha), as well as those affected by nuclear testing and youth groups. We recognize and appreciate their valuable contribution to taking forward nuclear disarmament. We will continue to draw on the expertise of leading scientists and consult and work inclusively with affected communities.

10. The Treaty's humanitarian spirit is reflected in its positive obligations, aimed at redressing the harm caused by nuclear weapons use and testing. We will strengthen international cooperation amongst States Parties to advance the implementation of the positive obligations of this Treaty. We will work with affected communities to provide age and gender sensitive assistance without discrimination to survivors of use or testing of nuclear weapons, and to remediate environmental contamination. We emphasize the innovative gender provisions of the Treaty and stress the importance of the equal, full and effective participation of both women and men in nuclear disarmament diplomacy.

11. We will work to build the membership of the Treaty in all regions. We will harness the public conscience in support of our goal of universal adherence to the Treaty and its full implementation. We will work to implement the Action Plan that we have adopted to guide our efforts to achieve the Treaty's objectives and goals. We will meet regularly to review the implementation of this Treaty and we will identify any additional measures to strengthen the Treaty and move nuclear disarmament forward.

12. We will also work with states outside the Treaty. We recognize the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT) as the cornerstone of the disarmament and nonproliferation regime, and deplore threats or actions that risk undermining it. As fully committed states parties to the NPT, we reaffirm the complementarity of the Treaty with the NPT. We are pleased to have advanced the implementation of the NPT's Article VI by bringing into force a comprehensive legal prohibition of nuclear weapons, as a necessary and effective measure related to the cessation of the nuclear arms race and to nuclear disarmament. We urge all NPT States Parties to reinvigorate their efforts to fully implement the obligation of Article VI and the actions and commitments agreed at NPT review conferences. We reiterate our commitment to work constructively with all NPT States Parties to achieve our shared objectives.

13. We will continue to support all measures that can effectively contribute to nuclear disarmament. These include efforts to bring into force the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty, interim measures to reduce the risk of use and threat of use of nuclear weapons, further development of disarmament verification measures, strengthening negative security assurances and a legal instrument prohibiting fissile material for the production for nuclear weapons and other nuclear explosive devices. We pledge to continue collaborating with Nuclear Weapons Free Zones, affirming that the prohibitions, obligations and objectives of the Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons are fully compatible with and complementary to the treaties establishing these Zones.

14. We pledge to highlight further the urgency of nuclear disarmament, the important evidence regarding the humanitarian consequences and risks posed by the existence of nuclear weapons in all relevant disarmament and non-proliferation processes and to the global public more widely. The prevention of these consequences must be at the center of our collective efforts to achieve and maintain a world without these weapons.

15. We urge all states to join the Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons without delay. We appeal to those states that are not yet ready to take this step to engage cooperatively with the Treaty and work with us in support of our shared goal of a world free of nuclear weapons. We deplore the actions of some nuclear-armed states to discourage non-nuclear-armed states from joining the Treaty. We suggest that the energy and resources of these states would be better directed to making concrete progress towards nuclear disarmament. This would truly contribute to sustainable peace, security and development for all. We would welcome and celebrate such progress.

16. We have no illusions about the challenges and obstacles that lie before us in realizing the aims of this Treaty. But we move ahead with optimism and resolve. In the face of the catastrophic risks posed by nuclear weapons and in the interest of the very survival of humanity, we cannot do otherwise. We will take every path that is open to us, and work persistently to open those that are still closed. We will not rest until the last state has joined the Treaty, the last warhead has been dismantled and destroyed and nuclear weapons have been totally eliminated from the Earth.