

Draft Parliamentary Action Plan for a Nuclear-Weapon-Free World: 2017 - 2020¹

Draft – details of sections 4 and 5 still to be developed.

1. Background

Nuclear threats are rising due to uncertainty about nuclear policies under the new US administration, unresolved conflicts between Russia and NATO/European Union, and increased tensions in North East Asia and South Asia.

In January 2017, the Bulletin of Atomic Scientists set the hands of the Doomsday Clock to 2½ minutes to midnight, the closest to nuclear Armageddon the world has been since the Cuban Missile Crisis.

There is a universal obligation, affirmed by the International Court of Justice, to eliminate nuclear weapons. Governments have agreed to this obligation through United Nations resolutions, various treaties including the nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty and Nuclear Weapon Free Zone treaties, and through a range of declarations.

Most countries have already rejected nuclear weapons. On the other hand, more than 50% of the worlds' population live in the 30 countries that either possess nuclear weapons or rely on extended nuclear deterrence for their security, especially to deter the use of nuclear weapons by others.

In this context, there are a range of measures to be taken to achieve a nuclear-weapon-free world, not all of which will be taken by all States at the same time.

Non-nuclear states, for example, are more willing to take comprehensive measures to prohibit nuclear weapons nationally (through legislation) and regionally (through nuclear-weapon-free zones), or even to join a multilateral nuclear prohibition treaty which is currently being negotiated.

Nuclear armed States and those under extended nuclear deterrence relationships are reluctant to give up the nuclear deterrence option and join a prohibition agreement while others still possess nuclear weapons. However, they could take interim measures to reduce the risks of nuclear weapons being used, strengthen the norm against use, reduce the types and numbers of nuclear weapons, develop confidence building measures and develop alternatives to nuclear weapons in security doctrines in order to pave the way for comprehensive prohibition.

Progress on comprehensive and incremental measures can proceed simultaneously, along with non-proliferation measures.

¹ The action plan is being developed by PNND in consultation with members of delegations to the Inter-Parliamentary Union and the Parliamentary Assembly of the Organisation for Security and Cooperation in Europe, to assist parliamentary action to follow-up on nuclear risk-reduction and disarmament resolutions adopted by these two inter-parliamentary bodies. Please send feedback on the draft to info@pnnd.org

2. Role of parliaments and parliamentarians

Parliaments and parliamentarians play a key role in the implementation of nuclear disarmament obligations. They develop policy, ensure government accountability, provide a public forum for discussing obligations and initiatives, ratify international agreements, adopt national implementation measures and allocate funding for the above. In addition, parliamentarians, working in cooperation with colleagues from other legislatures, can help build bridges and develop common approaches to nuclear disarmament.

Mr Ban Ki-moon, UN Secretary-General from 2007 to 2016, recognized this important role in a letter he sent to every parliament in 2010:

Parliamentarians and parliaments play a key role in the success of disarmament and non-proliferation efforts. Parliaments support the implementation of treaties and global agreements contributing to the rule of law and promoting adherence to commitments. They adopt legislation that increases transparency and accountability, thus building trust, facilitating verification and creating conditions that are conducive to the further pursuit of disarmament. At a time when the international community is facing unprecedented global challenges, parliamentarians can take on leading roles in ensuring sustainable global security, while reducing the diversion of precious resources from human needs. As parliaments set the fiscal priorities for their respective countries, they can determine how much to invest in the pursuit of peace and cooperative security.

3. Issues and areas for parliamentary action

Guidance for parliamentary action on nuclear disarmament is provided by resolutions and declarations adopted by the Inter-Parliamentary Union and the Parliamentary Assembly of the Organisation for Security and Cooperation in Europe.

Together these two inter-parliamentary bodies include the legislatures of all the nuclear-armed States, all the States under extended nuclear deterrence doctrines, and virtually all of the non-nuclear States.

The two most relevant IPU resolutions, both adopted by consensus, are [Advancing nuclear non-proliferation and disarmament, and securing the entry into force of the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty: The role of parliaments](#), adopted at the 120th IPU Assembly in 2009; and [Towards a nuclear-weapon-free world: The contribution of parliaments, adopted](#) at the 130th IPU Assembly in 2014.

These resolutions include a number of agreed actions for parliaments and parliamentarians, including to:

- Support the full ratification and entry-into force of the comprehensive nuclear test ban treaty;
- Support negotiations on a fissile materials treaty;
- Urge the nuclear-armed states to reduce the operational readiness to use nuclear weapons, and to make deeper, faster and irreversible cuts to all types of nuclear weapons;
- Work with governments to eliminate the role of nuclear weapons in security doctrines;
- Urge their governments to commence negotiations on a nuclear weapons convention or a similar package of agreements to achieve a nuclear-weapon-free world;
- Promote the establishment of additional nuclear-weapon-free zones, especially one in the Middle East;

- Work with their governments and civil society to strengthen the Nuclear Non-proliferation Treaty (NPT) and ensure success of the NPT Review Conferences;
- Cooperate with civil society to build awareness about nuclear weapons risks and the need for nuclear disarmament, including through commemoration of the International Day for the Total Elimination of Nuclear Weapons;
- Examine national budgets to facilitate these goals.

Background information on the above issues, along with examples of parliamentary action, are included in the IPU/PNND Handbook for *Parliamentarians on Supporting Nuclear Non-Proliferation and Disarmament* (available in Arabic, English, French, Russian and Spanish).

The most relevant declarations adopted by the OSCE Parliamentary Assembly (by consensus) are the [Istanbul Declaration](#) (2013), [Helsinki Declaration](#) (2015) and [Tbilisi Declaration](#) (2016). In these declarations the parliamentary delegations to the OSCE PA agreed to:

- Urge all OSCE States with nuclear weapons or under extended nuclear deterrence relationships to reduce the risks of a nuclear war by taking nuclear weapons off high-alert and by adopting no-first-use policies;
- Encourage all OSCE States to participate in United Nations-facilitated deliberations and negotiations on multilateral nuclear disarmament in 2017;
- Call on all OSCE States to participate in the 2018 UN international conference on nuclear disarmament at the highest level, to include parliamentarians in their delegations to the conference and to pursue the adoption of nuclear-risk-reduction, transparency and disarmament measures at the conference.

4. Parliamentary actions (this section to be developed)

- Nuclear testing
- Fissile materials treaty
- Nuclear risk reduction
- Stockpile reduction
- Eliminating nuclear weapons from security doctrines
- Establishing nuclear-weapon-free zones
- Negotiations for a prohibition treaty, nuclear weapons convention or framework agreement
- Nuclear weapons spending
- Conventional arms control
- Public education and events

5. Calendar 2017-2020

a. Diplomatic events – multilateral disarmament conferences

Currently, the most important diplomatic (multilateral) conferences relating to nuclear disarmament from 2017 – 2020 are a) the UN negotiations for a nuclear prohibition treaty in 2017, b) the UN High Level Conference on Nuclear Disarmament in 2018 and c) the NPT Review Conference in 2020. Below is a more detailed list of conferences:

2017:

- i. Conference on Disarmament
- ii. UN negotiations for a nuclear prohibition treaty
- iii. NPT Preparatory Meeting for the 2020 NPT Review Conference
- iv. UN General Assembly

2018:

- i. Conference on Disarmament
- ii. NPT Preparatory Meeting for the 2020 NPT Review Conference
- iii. UNGA High Level Conference on Nuclear Disarmament
- iv. UN General Assembly

2019:

- i. Conference on Disarmament
- ii. NPT Preparatory Meeting for the 2020 NPT Review Conference
- iii. UN General Assembly

2020

- i. Conference on Disarmament
- ii. NPT Review Conference
- iii. UN General Assembly

b. 2018 Inter-Parliamentary assemblies

The following is a list of key inter parliamentary assemblies where further cooperation for nuclear disarmament can be built between parliaments and parliamentarians.

- i. IPU Assemblies
- ii. PNND Assembly
- iii. OSCE Annual Assembly

c. Civil society dates

These are suitable dates for parliaments and civil society to organize joint events to increase public awareness about nuclear weapons and nuclear disarmament.

- i. Jan 24: Anniversary of the 1st UN resolution, which was adopted by consensus and put forward the goal of the elimination of nuclear weapons;
- ii. August 6: Anniversary of the nuclear bombing of Hiroshima
- iii. August 9: Anniversary of the nuclear bombing of Nagasaki
- iv. August 29: International Day Against Nuclear Tests
- v. September 21: International Day for Peace
- vi. September 26: International Day for the Total Elimination of Nuclear Weapons